

**EXCLUSIVE: SOF IN RED CHINA**

# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Journal of Professional Adventurers

SEPTEMBER  
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COVER: SOF's team of weapons experts, including Robert K. Brown, Peter G. Kokalis and Bob Jordan, went behind China's Great Wall to report on the full spectrum of military small arms from the world's most populous nation. Pictured are the Type 54 12.7x108mm HMG (top), Type 81 assault rifle (center), and Type 74 squad machine gun (bottom). SOF was the first team of Westerners invited to examine these weapons. Check out this exclusive report beginning on page 32.

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# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

## Freedom of the Press?

**L**AST month in Command Guidance I wrote that we were on our way to court to settle the battle over our personal service classified ads. The multimillion-dollar civil suit brought against us in Arkansas contended that we knew, or should have known, that a particular personal service ad run in SOF could have caused someone harm.

This charge was outrageous, and I was more than ready to prove my case. I would hope that *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine publishes under the same protections afforded by the First Amendment of the Constitution and the same rulings laid down by the Supreme Court as does every other publication in the United States. I'd also hope that these same fundamental guarantees apply to SOF's personal service advertisers — mostly U.S. military veterans who sought work as military specialists, couriers, bodyguards, corporate and private security personnel, and private investigators. After all, the right to work is really meaningless without the right to advertise for work.

There was simply no doubt in my mind that we would win. Unfortunately, my day in court never came. The case settled before I got there.

It took a half-dozen lawyers to pin me down on the floor, but I finally acceded to the settlement. I guess my pragmatic business sense finally caught up with me. No matter what the jury decided, the case would inevitably wind its expensive way up the appeals ladder to the U.S. Court of Appeals and probably to the U.S. Supreme Court. And we're not just talking months here. This process would take many years.

And in the meantime? All of my energy would go into pursuing the

issue, which I know I'd win. Besides, I'd have a very important point to prove and a law-making precedent to set, and I'd probably make the world a little safer for advertisers and publishers.

But would that journey be worth it? This magazine, in which I've invested 12 years of my life, would have suffered. The causes for which I've fought — POW/MIA and veterans' rights, our right to keep and bear arms, our uncompromising support for freedom fighters around the world, to name a few — might have lost one of their strongest supporters and voices. And you, the more than half-million readers around the world who pick up SOF every month, might have lost an important political forum as well, in what I believe is the finest combat-reporting journal published today.

Of course, the world would still turn if SOF went under, and there are many, from the corridors of the Kremlin to the politically pink hallways of our own State Department, who wish it would fail. But I owe you, and the people and causes we support, more than just a legal footnote in some journalism textbook. I owe you the same loyalty we all share toward the men and women around the world who fight in democracy's front line. I owe you their voice, and it's through the pages of SOF that you hear at least a whisper of it each month.

It was a tough decision, but I'll stand by it without apology — except to those honest people who are now unable to advertise their skills in the pages of SOF. They're the real victims, and it's their rights that have felt the muzzle-blast of censorship. ☒

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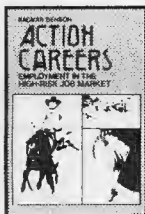
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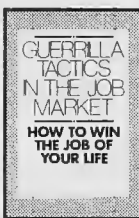
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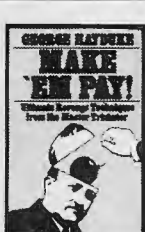
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fathom it any other way!"

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# FLAK

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Sirs:

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Once again, thank you for your generosity. Without those funds we could not have supported the rifle accurizing, our reloading program or the trip to the Nationals.

Jim Starr  
Colorado State  
Rifle and Pistol  
Association

## HIGHWAY 19 REVISITED...

Sirs:

"Graveyard in the Clouds" by James Martin Davis (SOF, July '87) was a marvelous remembrance and tribute to those fallen Frenchmen.



Highway 19 was really impassable and little more than a crude trail in 1957 when the American government decided to make it into a major highway. Johnson, Drake and Piper out of Minneapolis built this highway and in record time. Their head man, Ray Pape, was indeed a construction genius. The logistics were horrible, and he handled the problems all alone and from start to finish.

The highway was built in increments, one facet headquartered in Qui Nhon and the other in Pleiku. They met in the middle with the finished product. My job was to audit the contract. I had seen and worked on projects of this nature, but this one was a real marvel of that old-time American know-how.

Here is a picture of a python we found under a newly constructed bridge culvert in the Mang Yang Pass area. The python was totally immobilized by the weight of a recently devoured deer that weighed 117 pounds.

Thomas Echols  
Goshen, Virginia

## CONGRESSIONAL COMMUNISTS...

Sirs:

As I watched the Iran-Contra Inquisition last week, a congressman asked Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams about members of Congress who use their office to aid the Sandinistas and the guerillas in El Salvador. Who are these congressional communists? Can you publish their names, state, district and party affiliation?

Michael R. Fierstine  
Marshall, Minnesota

*Perhaps the two most notorious are Representatives Pat Schroeder (D-Colorado) and Ron Dellums (D-California).*

*Comrade Dellums, who compromised himself seriously in supporting the communist regime in Grenada (see "The Grenada Papers," SOF, February '84), allowed his offices to be used by Salvadoran Farid Handel in March-April 1980 to lay the groundwork for the establishment of the International Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). Handel is the brother of Shafik Handel, general secretary of the Communist Party of El Salvador, and CISPES is in effect a communist front. The brothers Handel incidentally are of Palestinian extraction but are Salvadoran citizens.*

*Comrade Schroeder, who once made common cause with some yahoos from the extreme left in an attempt to close down SOF, sent out a fund-raising letter for the Nicaragua Network on 17 June 1985. This is a communist front organization designed to "educate" Americans about the true nature of the Sandinista regime, to provide material assistance and to assist in sending "Sandalistas" (left-leaning Americans) to Nicaragua to pick coffee. Comrade Patti's letter bragged that "the Nicaragua Network has channeled over \$320,000 in direct material aid to Nicaragua... Its goal for 1985 is to deliver another \$300,000."*

*Comrades Dellum and Schroeder both serve on the House Armed Services Committee, and Comrade Patti has of late hinted she just might run for president of the United States next year.*

*Continued on page 8*



# NOBODY SEEN

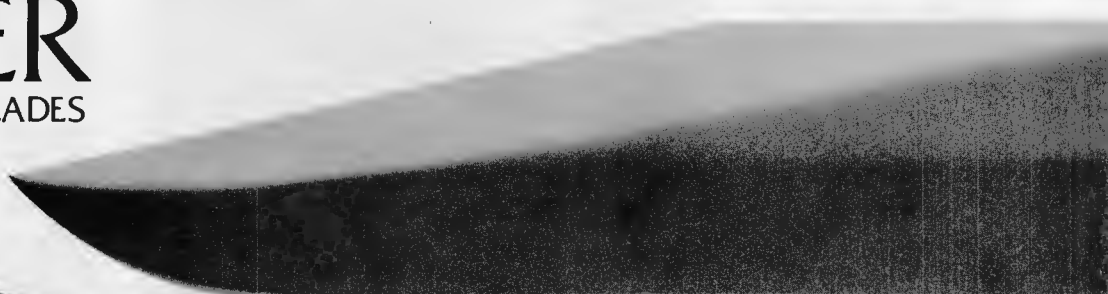
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"We should explore Mars... might be a good place to relocate our dissidents."

## CONTRA GEAR...

Sirs:

Here's another shipment of gear for our friends down South. We in the STEM team feel strongly supportive of the contras, since they are risking their lives fighting an enemy that is superior in three ways — funding, weapons/equipment and numbers. Since the contras' opposition is Marxist, it will go to whatever lengths necessary, however ruthless, to attain its goals. Anyhow, we wish all the luck in the world to the contras in their fight, since if they don't win themselves, we will catch up with some of this gear we have sent very soon.

Sgt. B.L. & Cpl. A.W.  
STEM Team

I recently sent another donation to the ESNDF. Benjamin Linder's death made up my mind. On "Nightline" I heard a misty-eyed "Sandalista" assure Ted Koppel that Nicaragua is nonaligned. A *Washington Post* columnist charged that, besides Linder, two "peasants" were killed, although every other report said militia. Finally, it was reported that various support groups are supplying millions to Managua.

SOF sees and reports the danger that others refuse to accept. People tell me that we have no business in Central America; they don't mention the Bulgarians, Libyans, East Germans and others who are there. Besides equipment, the freedom fighters need a fair press and an informed public. I am proud to do what I can in this fight.

Michael Lindsay  
Virginia

*While the complete story on how Linder was killed has yet to*

*materialize, there have been some reports in the media that cast more than a little suspicion on the various accounts the Nicaraguan government and left-wing sympathizers have put out. The two Nicaraguans killed with Linder were militia and were armed, as was Linder himself. One militia survivor from the ambush said Linder was wearing militia clothing, boots, had on a cartridge belt and had been carrying an AK-47 rifle when his team walked into the area where the ambush took place. Linder laid his rifle aside while taking notes. None of which means anything, of course. If you're traveling with one army or another in a combat zone, don't be surprised when the other side shoots at you.*

## SOF HITS THE BOOKSHELVES...

Sirs:

I am a helicopter pilot on active duty with the U.S. Army and a long-time reader of SOF. Your magazine is without a doubt the best of its kind, and you have now gone another one better than all the rest. Your new book series is a great idea. Technical integrity is hard to find in non-fiction, not to mention the fabled fiction. I just finished your first two books — both were a pleasant alternative to what is normally available. I particularly liked *Doorgunner* for its perspective from the back seat of the beloved Huey. I look forward to the arrival of future magazine issues and books.

Ronald R. Orr Jr.  
Fort Worth, Texas

## WHO WAS THERE?...

Sirs:

Re the "I Was There" story in the July issue. Either the author is full of crap or an editor screwed up his story.

Marines in the 'Nam, in 1966, armed with M16s? Ha!

Alan Burch  
Council, Idaho

*U.S. Army Special Forces units carried the M16 in Vietnam beginning in 1964. U.S. Army Airborne and Air Cavalry units went to Vietnam with the M16 starting in 1965. Some Marines received the M16 in late 1966, but Marine line battalions did not receive it until spring/summer 1967. And you're right — a typo by the author moved the action in "I Was There" from 1967 to 1966.*

## FREEDOM FLYER...

Sirs:

I particularly enjoyed the article "Flight of the *Lady Ellen*" in the June SOF. This is the best article about the weird world of Third World flying I've yet seen. For a long time I've felt the primary purpose of the FAA and customs was the prevention of flight and free trade.

After reading the article it occurred to me that donations to support a specific aircraft or small unit might be a better way to raise funds than the more general campaigns now in effect. There might be more of a feeling that this is "our" unit.

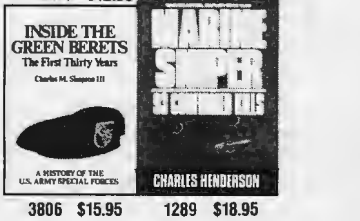
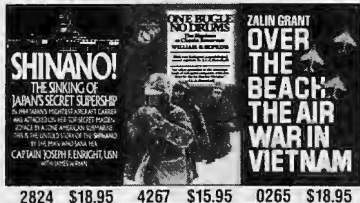
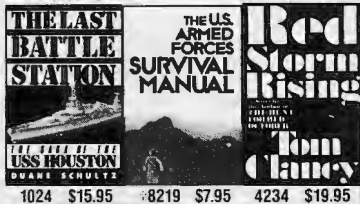
I look forward to seeing you all at this year's SOF Convention.

TSgt. Robert G. Klaus  
Las Vegas, Nevada

## LETTERS

**Your input has made FLAK one of SOF's most popular columns. Tell us what you think — about SOF or any other subject you consider worth our readers' attention. If you'd like to see your letter in print the way you wrote it, keep it brief and to the point. Send letters to FLAK, c/o SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. ✉**

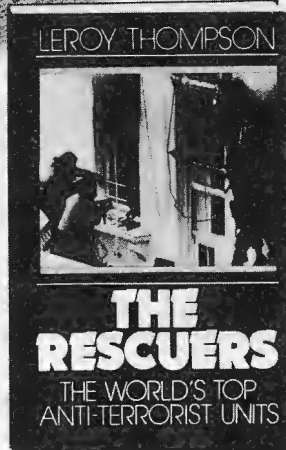
# How do we make them stop?



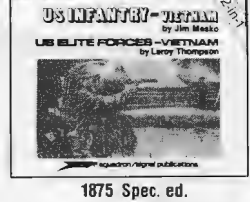
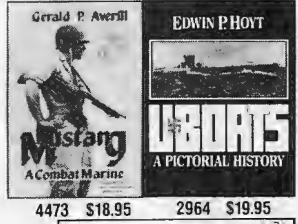
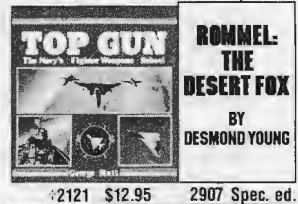
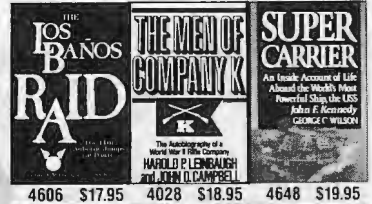
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## AFGHAN ASSAULT...

Afghan mujahideen appear to have savaged a pro-Soviet government force in the Kandahar region of Afghanistan.

According to *Jane's Defence Weekly*, some 1,000 lives were lost in fighting around Kandahar recently, and the majority of the dead were young recruits of the Soviet-installed regime in Kabul.

The mujahideen also claim to have shot down up to 16 aircraft — continuing evidence of the lethality of U.S.-supplied Stingers.

The magnitude of the government losses — if true — could indicate that the mujahideen are staging larger operations than in the past. And that could be an early sign that the Afghan war is moving into a new phase, one in which the Soviets have to choose between a major increase in their commitment to the struggle or seeing their puppet government defeated militarily.

Read 'em and weep, Ivan.

## HONOR ROLL...

El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund contributors:

James F. Powell, Carlos M. Muñiz, Paul C. Ewing.

Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund contributors:

Matt Zellen, Customers of G.I. Supply.

Refugee Relief International, Inc. contributors:

Michael D. Phillips, Peter Gordon.

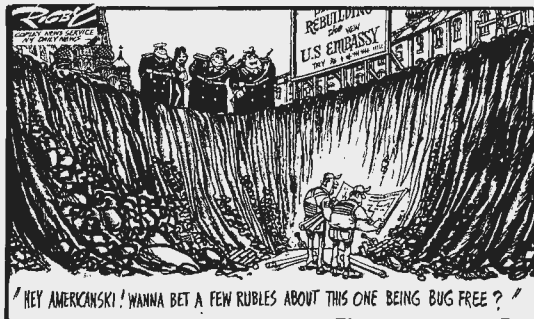
Our heartfelt thanks go out to these people and the numerous other donors who requested their names not be printed.

# BULLETIN BOARD



## LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD SCRIPTS...

SOF and Noble Entertainment producer Mike Leighton are soliciting completed screenplays on Vietnam. Forward a copy of your original to: Vietnam Screenplays, c/o *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Maybe there's an Oscar in your future....



## AXING OUR ALLIES...

Congressional doves — rephrase that congressional *wimps* — not content with the long campaign to sabotage aid to the contras, have also tried to derail an attempt to modernize Honduran armed forces.

The congresspersons (somehow the term "men" doesn't seem to be the appropriate usage here) attempted to block the sale of 12 Northrop F-5E/F fighters to the Honduran air force.

The grounds, according to a letter to President Reagan signed by Senators Mark Hatfield (R-Oregon), Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Christopher Dodd (D-Connecticut), Claiborne Pell (D-Rhode Island), and 59 House members, were that the sale could provoke Nicaragua into introducing Soviet MiG fighters into its air force.

Presumably it wouldn't take much provocation, since the Nicaraguans have been preparing their Soviet-built air bases to handle MiG-21s.

Opposing U.S. aid to Honduras is a far different sort of act than opposing aid to the contras. Honduras — unlike the contras — is a) a country, with b) a democratically elected government that is c) allied with the United States, and d) facing a U.S. adversary backed by the Soviet Union across a common border.

The small but capable F-5s can hold their own against MiG-21s in the hands of Danny Ortega and his merry men. Appeasement cannot.

## ATTENTION 173RD VETS...

SOF contributor Ken Gaudet has been tasked by the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association with compiling a book on the unit's history from its activation in 1963 through its deactivation in 1972. Gaudet, who picked up two Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart, the Air Medal and CIB during his Vietnam tour with the 173rd in 1970, wants to hear from all unit members, including personnel op attached to, or who worked with, the brigade. Contact: Ken Gaudet, 3377 Solano Ave., Suite 437, Napa, CA 94558 for more details on the project or membership in the Brigade Association.

## DEATH RIDES A PALE CAN...

Just when you thought there wouldn't be anything truly new added to infantry combat, along comes Foamex — death in a spray can.

Foamex is an explosive which is supplied in an aerosol can. It's sprayed like shaving cream on a target and then ignited by standard detonators or det cord. The stuff is so insensitive to shock and temperature while in the can, according to a report in *Jane's Defence Weekly* (which doesn't name the manufacturer), that it can be considered a non-explosive as a practical matter.

It is sufficiently stiff that it can be sprayed onto a vertical surface and remain there, suggesting a convenient way to punch holes in walls and open doors. It can also be sprayed a considerable distance using suitable nozzles (opening the possibility of deadly new forms of hand-to-hand combat, to say nothing of a no-nonsense approach to roach control).

The material is so new that all its possible applications haven't been thought of yet, the magazine reports, but an obvious one leaps to mind — slipping a can into Col. Khadafi's shaving kit! Pity that the Ayatollah and Fidel Castro don't shave.



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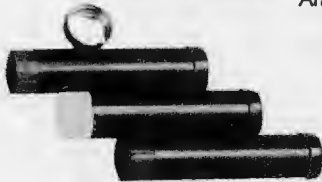
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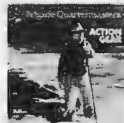
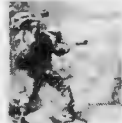
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## BARGAIN AIRFARE — MERC STYLE...

If you've been following our coverage of the Surinamese rebels led by Ronny Brunswijk, you'll be familiar with the two Brit mercs, Karl Finch and John Richards, who were working with the anti-government forces in-country. Although we only mentioned the rebels' "air force" in passing, here's the rest of the story.

Last October, Richards, a veteran para with French Foreign Legion service, and Finch managed to capture one of the best aircraft in the country, a Surinam Airways Twin Otter.

Posing as tourists, the pair joined a small crowd waiting to board the aircraft at Raleigh Falls airfield in the center of the country.

It looked like it would be a straightforward mission, but at the last minute a hitch developed: The mercs realized the aircraft's crew might not speak English, in which case they wouldn't be able to understand threats or instructions.

Happily, just then the crew chose to take a break from baggage loading.

Finch approached the pilot and casually asked: "Do you speak English?"

"Naturally," replied the pilot.

"Good," said Finch, pulling out a Colt automatic. "Then you'll do exactly as you're told."

Which he did, and the rebels were one airplane richer.

## TOUGH TIMES FOR TOM HAYDEN...

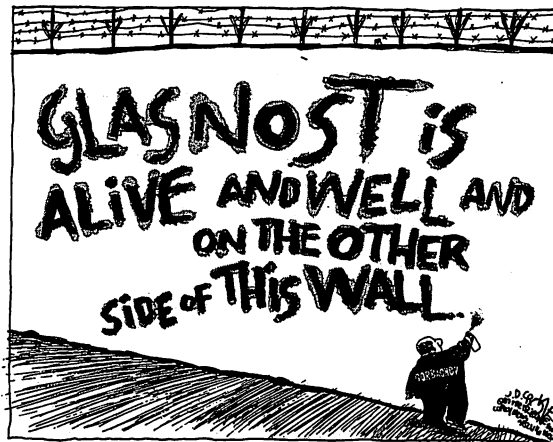
Last June, when student activists at San Jose City College in California threatened to disrupt the school's graduation ceremony in protest of the choice of commencement speaker, the college's administration bowed to their demands and disinvited the speaker.

Nothing seems to change, right? Wrong.

In this case the student activists were Vietnamese, and they were outraged by their college's decision to invite anti-Vietnam War activist Tom Hayden to address their graduation (at which 40 percent of those due to get degrees were Vietnamese).

The students had strong backing from San Jose's large Vietnamese community, many members of which consider Hayden, now a California state assemblyman from Santa Monica, and his wife, Jane Fonda, one of the reasons why South Vietnam fell to the communists.

Yes, yes, we know it's terribly rude and undemocratic to drive a speaker from the podium no matter how offensive his views (or his personality) may be, but there is something richly satisfying about this particular turn of the worm.



## HANOI OLIVER?...

It seems that the movie "Platoon" reached some sympathetic viewers — from Hanoi. According to the *Washington Inquirer*, Bui Xuan Nhat, Vietnam's acting chief U.N. envoy, had high praise for "Platoon." Nhat said that, in many ways, writer/director Oliver Stone's views agree with the official Hanoi version of what happened in the Vietnam War. Nhat said the story pits "evil against the innocent," the Americans being the force of evil and the Vietnamese people the innocent victims. Makes you think, doesn't it?

## HAVE SEALs GOT THE BOMB?...

The U.S. Navy's SEALs — arguably one of the most secret of U.S. elite forces — may also be the best armed. They just might have nuclear weapons.

A censored version of the Navy's 1986 Special Warfare Master Plan, fried out of the Pentagon under the Freedom of Information Act by the leftist Institute for Policy Studies, hints at just that, according to a story in the *Washington Post*.

The heavily censored text of the report makes no reference to the SEAL units having nukes, but the uncensored glossary contains the abbreviation SADM, which stands for Special Atomic Demolition Munition.

Presumably the abbreviation wouldn't be in the index unless the term had appeared in the text, the reasoning goes, and presumably if it was used in the text it was used in the context of the SEALs having an SADM capacity.

(SADMs presumably would be just the ticket for neutralizing troublesome "high value" targets in case of war — like submarine pens at Murmansk or Soviet Pacific Fleet facilities at Cam Ranh Bay.)

Admittedly, that's a lot of presuming, particularly since you could just as easily presume that some wag at the Pentagon slipped the reference in to keep the bad guys (to say nothing of the liberal press) on their toes; the Pentagon leaked word about four years ago that it was going to start using "disinformation" (or fibbing, as it is technically called) as a means of fighting leaks and fooling foes.

The "death to America" crowd doubtless will find the thought of some ill-tempered Yank in a wet suit swimming about in their harbor with an atomic bomb more than a bit unsettling. But then if they can't take a joke, to hell with them.

*Continued on page 112*

# Adventure

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I'D just completed an uneventful eight-hour shift which ended with three minor arrests. I managed to get off duty just after midnight and was home enjoying a cup of hot chocolate with my wife when we heard a loud crash. We both ran outside to investigate.

What appeared to be a beat-up '66 Ford pickup was rounding a corner near our house, and I ran to the end of the block in time to see it sideswipe my neighbor's parked car. The truck kept going. I jumped into my vehicle, told my wife to call the department and went after the truck, intending to follow it until a marked unit arrived to stop it.

The pickup was still cruising the subdivision when I caught up with it. The three white male occupants soon noticed me and sped up in an attempt to escape. They cut back through the subdivision, crossed a main street and reached a dirt road. As I chased them I wrote the truck's license plate number on the nearest available surface — my hand.

After I followed them for over two miles, they turned and stopped. I stopped 15 to 20 feet behind them, waiting to see their next move. I didn't wait long. Almost immediately one of the passengers exited the truck and charged at me with an ax; he held it above his head with both hands in classic Lizzie Borden fashion.

I was halfway out of my car and in midsentence identifying myself as a police officer when the driver shifted into reverse, gunned it and rammed my car with his. Had he been a second slower, he would have pinned my assailant between the two vehicles. However, the driver's action now prevented my attacker from getting any closer, as well as disabling my car. The ax wielder returned to the truck and they began to drive away.

I'd gotten a good look at the ax man and could identify him. However, I had only seen the back of the driver's head, not enough for a conviction in Michigan. Since my car was disabled, all I could do was run for the departing pickup. I latched onto the driver's door, opened it and grabbed the sleeve of the driver's coat.

I was unsuccessful in yanking him out the door and, as he accelerated, I lost my footing. Soon I found myself being dragged next to the truck. After a few seconds of this I lost my grip and fell spread-eagled to the dirt. With no time to roll out of the way, the back tire went between my legs, over my pelvic area and stomach and off my left side. At the same time my left leg caught on something under the truck, causing me to do a partial somersault as the tire passed over me. I found myself lying injured on the road with the pickup



# I WAS THERE

by James L. Speicher

## Positive ID by Gunfire



**For the author, a well-placed .45 round proved the difference between a conviction and a clean getaway. Photo: James L. Speicher**

pulling away. My off-duty weapon, dislodged from my belt during the somersault, was lying close to my left hand.

My off-duty weapon was a government-issue Colt Model 1911A1 .45-caliber pistol. I prefer the large caliber and feel comfortable with it. At that time the weapon was loaded with standard military ball instead of my usual Super Vel hollowpoints, which was a disadvantage but turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Instinctively I grabbed the weapon, racked the slide and opened fire on the fleeing truck.

By the time I got the first shot off, the pickup was already 40 feet away. My second shot hit the truck: I heard the dull, heavy thud of bullet against metal. I emptied the magazine, firing in rapid succession. When the slide locked back, I realized I had only achieved that one hit. I lay there and watched the pickup vanish over the hill. My watch was smashed during the incident and the hands indicated 0115 — only 10 minutes had elapsed since it all began.

An eerie glow of headlights lit the road as I began to inch my way back toward my immobilized vehicle. Soon relief flooded over me as a marked unit

from my department arrived. I remember showing the deputies the license plate number on my hand and telling them that there was at least one bullet hole somewhere on the truck. After that it was a myriad of lights and people as I made my way to the hospital. I remember the mounting pain, the chilling cold and the fear as I wondered how badly my legs were damaged.

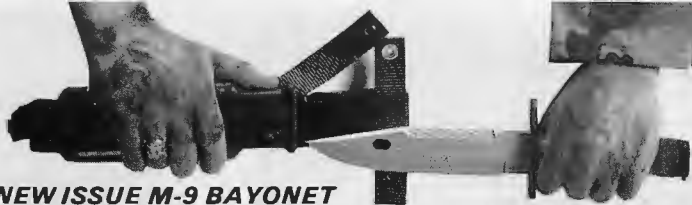
Later in my hospital bed I learned several things: By 0600 the same day the pickup had been found and two 17-year-old white males were arrested, one being the driver and the other the ax-wielding passenger. The third occupant, a 14-year-old male, was not arrested as there were no charges pending against him. Subsequently, the prosecutor issued warrants against the two totaling 19 years in felony charges. I also got some bad news — they were both arraigned and released on their own recognizance, having spent only three hours in jail.

As for me, I was suffering from mild hypothermia and had my pelvis broken in four places. Muscles in the upper thighs and abdominal area were badly torn and I had substantial internal bleeding. I eventually recovered but it took months.

When the preliminary exam at the district court level was finally held (it was delayed due to my hospitalization), I was able to identify the man who attacked me with the ax. That was not the case with the driver because throughout the entire incident I never saw his face.

But then came the crowning glory, based on the military ball ammo that I fired that night. My second shot had hit the back of the cab behind the driver. The bullet had gone through the cab and the seat, striking the driver on his right side about halfway between his waist and shoulder. However, the bullet was so spent by the time it struck the driver that it only caused a minor flesh wound. When the subject was arrested and searched, the bullet was found lodged in the front lining of his jacket. A ballistics test confirmed that the bullet found in the driver's jacket was one

*Continued on page 88*



### NEW ISSUE M-9 BAYONET

Official military issue M-9 Bayonet is manufactured by Buck Knives and designed by Phrobis III. It's much, much more than a bayonet. It's also a versatile field tool.

- SPECIFICATIONS**
- 1) Length: 12 1/4" (blade: 7 1/8"; handle: 5 1/4")
  - 2) "Zone heat-treated" forged steel blade with Rockwell "C" 56-58
  - 3) 1/2" tang blade with extension attached to butt cap
  - 4) Handle and Sheath made of DuPont ST 801 glass-filled plastic
  - 5) Weight (knife and sheath): 1.76 lbs.

- FEATURES**
- 1) Wire cutter
  - 2) Sawtooth back edge cuts wood, metal, rope, or ice
  - 3) Bayonet for M16/AR15 rifle
  - 4) Built-in sharpening stone
  - 5) Ambidextrous sheath with new quick-release belt clip
  - 6) Bottle opener
  - 7) Screwdriver
  - 8) Velcro® attached Cordura® pouch. Rugged quality, collectability, and versatility!
- SF07-2091 ..... \$129.95

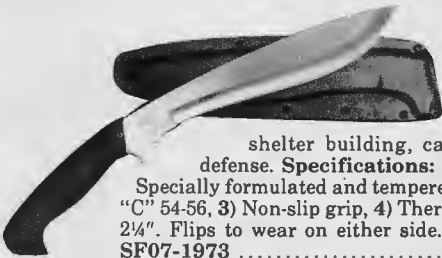


### GRAPPLING HOOK

Field tested extensively! Built around a 1/2" forged steel eyebolt that tests in excess of 12,000 lbs. The five tines that are welded to the shank are made of 4140 chrome-moly heat-treated steel. These tines are strong enough to resist a load of about 2,000 lbs., but they are ductile enough to fail by opening before breaking. Sand-blasted and coated with a tough, baked-on epoxy coating for long lasting protection. **Note:** The Grappling Hook is not considered to be a primary means of penetration or for life-support missions, but rather an extended pair of hands.

SF05-0718 ..... \$59.95

## FOR RUGGED LIFESTYLES!



### BUSHMASTER KNIFE

High quality jungle knife that has its roots deeply planted in history. Designed like the Kopsis knife of Alexander the Great. Use for clearing brush,

shelter building, camp chores, and close-quarter defense. **Specifications:** 1) Length: 14 1/4"; Blade: 10"; 2)

Specially formulated and tempered stainless steel alloy, Rockwell "C" 54-56, 3) Non-slip grip, 4) Thermoplastic sheath fits belts up to 2 1/4". Flips to wear on either side. A quality survival knife/tool!

SF07-1973 ..... \$49.95

### DEPLOYMENT BAG

Cordura® nylon dual-opening bag features a foam stiffener to hold it open for easy loading. To use, open one end, insert grappling hook with rope (coil rope into the cup formed by the tines of the hook). Holds up to 150 feet of 7/16" line. When ready to use, open the other end, remove the hook, and the rope is ready for deployment. Clean and simple!

SF05-0719 ..... \$29.95



### GHILLIE SUIT

Three-dimensional camouflage. Wear it and disappear! Inspired by the English game keepers called Ghillies, who used them when stalking poachers. They've been rediscovered and developed to their highest form by military special forces and snipers. Approximately 250 pieces of various earth colored burlap material are sewn to Velcro® and hung on to a sturdy polyester mesh parka with hood and face mask. Comes with its own carrier pack. Safety flame retardant treated Ghillie Suit becomes more effective with use. Great for hunting or wildlife photography. Sometimes you can fool Mother Nature.

SF01-0850 ..... \$149.95

### SHADOW KNIFE SHEATH

*Only the shadow will know!*

Keep your boot knife and valuables tucked away but accessible. The leg pouch/sheath has a wide Velcro® secured elastic band for a comfortable ride. The 2 1/4" x 3 1/2" pack cloth 2-pocket pouch will hold your credit cards, money, etc. securely and the slot for the boot clip is padded for total comfort.

SF07-2168 ..... \$12.95



### AFRICAN ARMY COMMANDO BOOT

Designed by the French for their African troops. Lightweight for hot weather desert or jungle use. 100% cotton canvas keeps feet dry and cool. Jump boot styling. Top strap closes for leg support. Cleated polyurethane outsole for lightweight, durable traction. Choose size by using the conversion chart shown below. Sizes: 39-46. European regular widths. Made in Israel. O.D.

SF03-1001 ..... \$29.95

U.S. Sizes and Metric Equivalents	U.S.	7	8	9	10	11	12		
	Metric	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46



### EYE ARMOR

New Official Military Sunglass by Gargoyles™. A poly-carbonate 4 times stronger than aluminum and 50 times stronger than glass. In tests they have repeatedly withstood impacts of a .177 caliber pellet traveling 290mph - no dents or abrasions. Wrap-back styling contours with your face for 210° of clear, undistorted protection from the sun's UV-rays as well as dust, sand, spent shells, wind, etc. Choose from four tints. Made in the U.S.A.

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 SF04-1063 Gargoyle Carry Case ..... \$9.50

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Presenting...

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*Firing, hand-engraved, 24-karat gold-plated semiautomatic M16, in a limited edition of only 1,500 in honor of the Vietnam War.*



"A beautiful memorial in itself to our Vietnam Veterans."

Jan Scruggs, Founder Vietnam Veterans Memorial

**I**n the hands of American troops it patrolled the Central Highlands with Special Forces . . . guarded against sappers at Bien Hoa . . . searched for VC in the Delta in PBRs . . . and humped the boonies in I Corps. The VC, who feared its high velocity round, called it the "Black Gun".

Today, it's one of the most famous firearms in world history. And it's part of the heritage of all of

us who proudly call ourselves Americans.

Two years in the making, The Vietnam War Commemorative M16 is the ultimate M16. It had to be—it honors our Vietnam Veterans. No time, trouble or expense has been spared.

## Only 1500 Will Be Made

This is the first limited-edition, collector-grade M16 ever issued. Only 1500 will be made, and each is individually serially numbered between 0001 and 1500, with the prefix "V", for Vietnam. The special numbers further add to the collector and historical value. The serial number and the owner's name will be inscribed on the Certificate of Authenticity. Serial No. 1 is being presented to General William Westmoreland and No. 2 to Jan Scruggs.

## 24-Karat Gold on Gleaming Black

The finish gleams like the black granite of "the Wall", the Vietnam Memorial. It is highly polished by hand, then given a special, high-temperature oxidizing process that transforms the outer surface

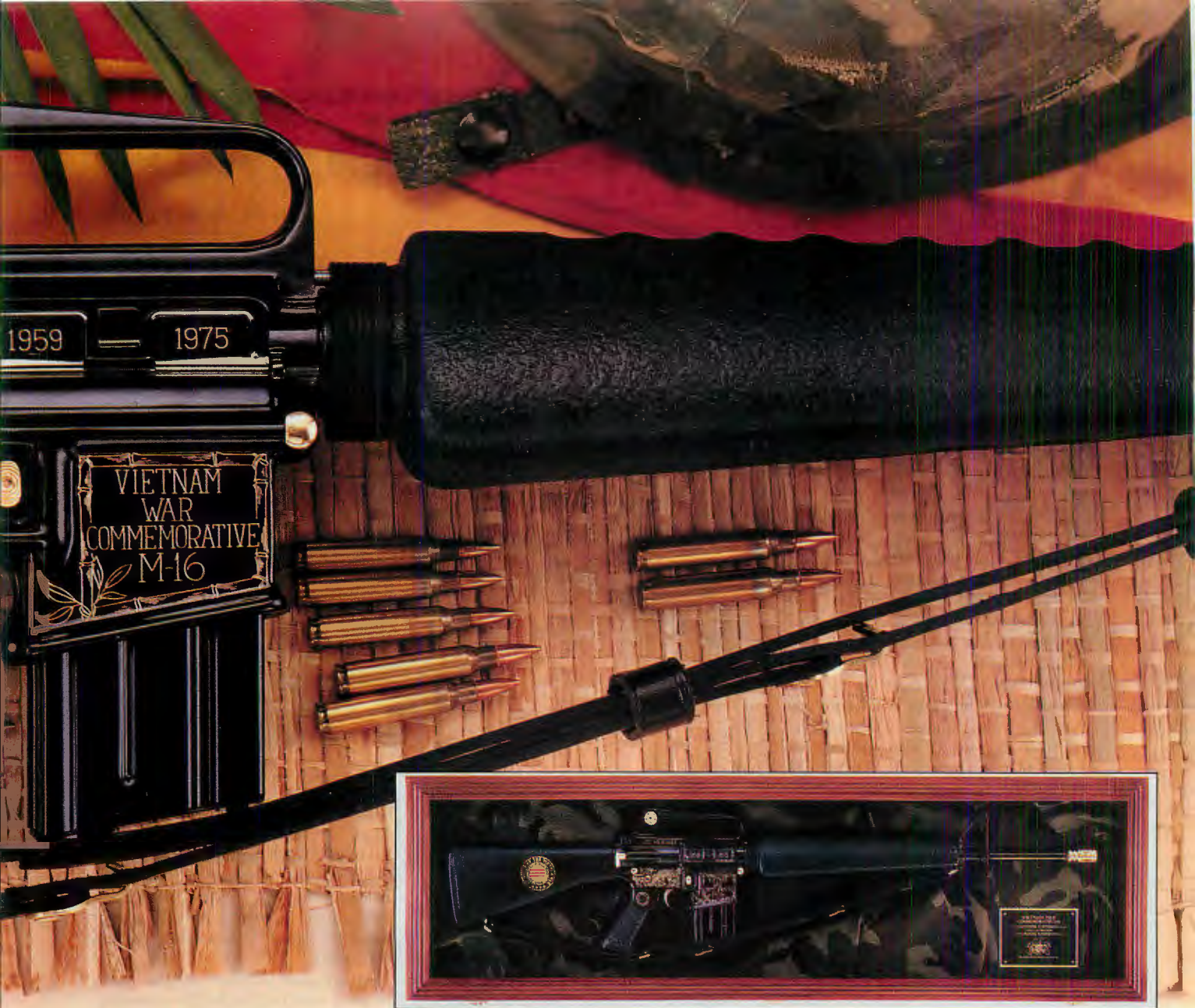
of the forged alloy receiver to an ultra-hard, high-gloss black that is next to a diamond in hardness. The barrel is mirror polished and blued to match.

## Hand Engraved

The commemorative inscriptions are all *hand engraved* and gold-gilt inlaid . . . the dragon—symbolic of war and of protection; the years of the war; "Lest We Forget"; and the proud name of this commemorative, in an engraved bamboo border. *Hand engraving is far more expensive and time consuming than other means, but hand-engraved weapons are always worth more—and it's a military tradition for special presentation pieces.*

As you hold this M16, your line of sight moves across the mirror polished carrying handle and barrel to the 24-karat gold-plated flash suppressor. 24-karat gold plating gleams across the trigger, selector lever, bolt catch, rear sight windage knob, forward bolt assist and the take-down pins.

Even the front and rear sling swivels are polished and 24-karat gold plated and—as you'd expect



An optional furniture-finished, solid-walnut cabinet with Vietnam-era camouflage cloth and fitted with an acrylic glass lid with three solid brass locks protects your investment from dust and unauthorized handling.

with a firearm of this quality—mounted with a deluxe, black leather, adjustable, military sling.

### Special, Textured Stocks

The ventilated Vietnam-era style handguard, pistol grip and butt stock shine with a special, black, heavily textured finish, which further sets this apart from any other M16 ever made.

The pistol grip and butt stock are fitted with gold and black commemorative cloisonne medallions.

### Not Just A Showpiece

But this is not just a showpiece. This is a firing Commemorative, the same size, configuration and specifications of the military-issue M16A1 rifle. A 20-round magazine and firing instructions are provided. As an advantage to arms collectors and veterans, it fires only in the semi-automatic mode (not full-automatic). *Anyone who can own a standard hunting rifle can own one.*

Even the standard M7 bayonet fits. The upper and lower receivers are forged of the finest 7075-T6 alloy, developed for space shuttle and jet plane superstructures. Forging is a more costly process than casting, but far superior, because it is stronger.

Each fires the same 5.56mm (.223) ammunition used in Vietnam and readily available in gun shops.

Because this M16 is functional, it could be called upon to defend your home and family.

The Vietnam War M16 is being custom built by gunsmiths who build M16s for our armed forces, our FBI, our CIA, our police SWAT teams and the governments of England, France, Australia, Canada, Switzerland, New Zealand and a half dozen other countries. They are the engineers and armorers of BFI, in Portland, Maine.

### First Ever

As the first commemorative M16 ever issued, this is in the "first ever" class of distinction. This category has seen well-documented, significant price increases. From the standpoint of future investment value, only 1500 will be made—placing it among the rarest of the rare.

Hand engraved firearms—especially *hand engraved military firearms—are few and far between.* As the world's first commemorative M16, this is an important collector firearm that is destined to grow in historical and sentimental value and, quite possibly, investment value.

### Satisfaction Guaranteed

This is available exclusively through The American Historical Foundation. To reserve, call toll free, write or visit. Satisfaction is guaranteed, or you may return for a full refund anytime within one month. If you do not have a firearms license we will coordinate delivery with you through your local firearms dealer, after your reservation is received here. If you do have a license, send a signed copy, and the M16 will be delivered directly to you.

With your reservation, you will also be made a Member of the Foundation and receive interesting information concerning military history and the care, display and collecting of military arms.

The phrase, "Lest We Forget", hand engraved on your M16, will show that you have not forgotten, or will ever forget, the Americans who fought for liberty and freedom in the Vietnam War.

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Yes, I wish to reserve the firing, hand-engraved, 24-karat gold-plated Vietnam War Commemorative M16. Only 1500 will be made. I will also receive the free bipod and membership in the Foundation. Satisfaction guaranteed.

My deposit (or credit card authorization) of \$95 is enclosed.

Please  charge or  invoice the balance due . . .

in ten equal payments of \$190.  in full.

Please also send the walnut display case, at \$225.

My payment in full is enclosed (\$1,995 per M16; display case, add \$225).

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For Visa, MasterCard or American Express, please send account number, expiration date and signature. Virginia residents add tax.



**W**ORLD War II GIs called it a "burp gun" or the "Schmeisser." Every German WWII militaria collector dreams of owning one. It was the beginning of a new era in submachine guns. More than a million were produced.

Developed at the Erma factory in Erfurt, Germany, the history of the famous MP 38/40 series began in the middle 1930s. It was designed to meet the requirements of both armored and airborne troops. The earliest known prototype is marked "EMP 36" (Erma *Maschinenpistole*, 1936). In configuration, it resembles closely what was to be adopted as the MP 38, except that the furniture is wood, there is a cross-bolt selector and the magazine-well is canted 30 degrees above vertical to the left.

A parallel but unsuccessful development by Hugo Schmeisser, known as the M.K. 36,III (*Maschinenkarabiner*, 1936,III) led to confusion at Aberdeen Proving Ground during the war and resulted in the erroneous application of his name to the Erma designs.

The MP 38 was only the second submachine gun adopted by the *Wehrmacht*. It was a radical departure from its predecessor, the MP 18,I. Firing from the open-bolt position by means of pure blowback, the MP 38 was the first successful SMG to be constructed entirely of steel and plastic and to incorporate a folding stock. Its receiver was fabricated from a machined casting with longitudinal lightening cuts extending the entire length and circumference. The grip frame, or lower receiver, was made from anodized aluminum.

As the war progressed, the demand for weapons became insatiable. More cost-effective and less labor-intensive methods were sought and resulted in the MP 40. The receiver tube, magazine-well and lower receiver group became brazed and welded sheet metal stampings. All of the components exhibit emphasis on spot and fusion welding, riveting, crimping, soldering and brazing, with as little machined bar stock as possible.

MP 40 receiver bodies were fabricated from a single piece of sheet-metal rolled into a tubular shape and spot welded. There are four longitudinal debris grooves and cuts for the retracting handle, magazine, sear and the stud which locks it to the lower receiver. All the steel components on this weapon were salt blued.

Flared for rapid insertion of magazines, the magazine-well has five longitudinal support ribs on each side. MP 38 magazine-wells were machined without ribbing. The magazine catch release has a large, knurled button on the left side which is depressed to re-



## FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

# Der Führer's Burp Gun



**MP 40 submachine gun fills the fantasies of every German militaria collector. How successful was this revolutionary weapon on the field of battle? Photo: Peter G. Kokalis**

lease empty magazines. When released, magazines fall away freely. The magazine-well is wrapped around the receiver tube and pinned in place.

Machined from bar stock, the cylindrical bolt has three grooves on the bottom to clear the magazine lips and the ejector, permanently fixed to the receiver tube by means of a cross pin in the magazine-well. The bolt's retracting handle is attached at the rear on the left side. No safety was provided on the MP 38 except to pull the bolt to the rear and hook its one-piece retracting handle in a notch (marked "S") cut above the handle's slot in the receiver tube. This only locks the bolt in the open position. If the weapon was carried with the bolt forward, a heavy impact could throw the bolt far enough to the rear to strip a round from the magazine and fire accidentally.

To prevent this from happening, a piece of leather with a buckle was wrapped around the front of the receiver to hold the retracting handle in the forward position. This makes as much sense as safety wire on the M60 GPMG, so a two-piece retracting

handle was added to the MP 40 which could be pushed into a notch to lock the bolt forward. Many MP 38s were so modified and designated MP 38/40. This modification is not without some disadvantages, as the handles sometimes fall apart or separate from the bolt body.

An unusual, Vollmer-designed, telescoping recoil spring/buffer assembly, to which the firing pin is attached, rides in the bolt's hollow. During firing, the bolt is thrown back against the base of the two-piece firing-pin assembly, driving the three-piece telescoping buffer and recoil spring to the rear. Early buffer assemblies were fabricated from machined stock. Later units were made from stamped tubing. Two holes in the front tube permit placement in a fixture when removing the firing pin and recoil spring. A conical projection at the end of the rear tube fits into a hole in the lower receiver's end cap. All very clever, but quite a nuisance as the tubing is easily damaged and impossible to repair. However, there appears to be no substance to the long-held belief that MP 40s produced near the end of the war were fitted with multiple-strand, MG 42-type recoil springs. Firing pin lengths vary and are not necessarily interchangeable.

The barrel is attached to the receiver

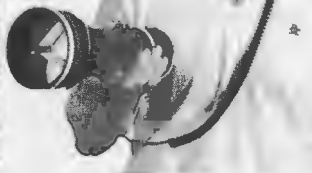
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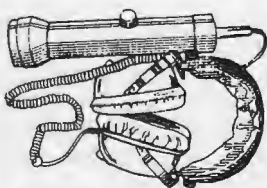
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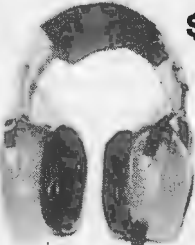
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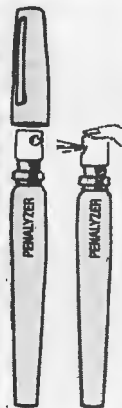
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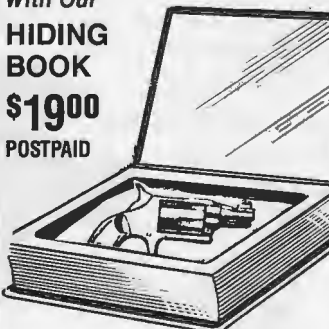
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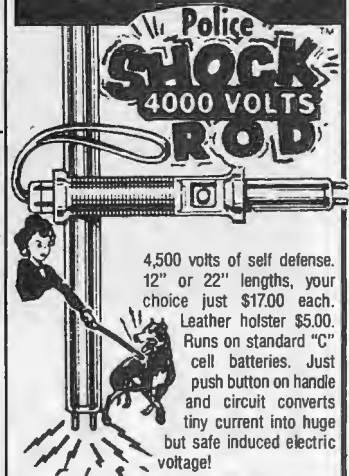
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tube by a hexagonal nut, lock washer and two half-moon retaining rings. A few of these barrel nuts have only two surfaces for contact with a wrench. An MG 34 wrench or 12-inch crescent can be used to remove the barrel nut. A bar under the barrel, fabricated from either magnesium alloy, stamped steel or bakelite, is considered by many to be an armored-vehicle firing-port rest. Nonsense. German soldiers of this era rode and fought outside the vehicles, not from within. Nor is it a heat dissipator, as others have suggested. This bar merely prevents the barrel nut from sliding forward during disassembly, with subsequent loss of the two retaining rings. It also helps to draw the barrel out of the receiver socket as the barrel nut is unscrewed — another example of the Teutonic obsession with unnecessary complexity.

With six grooves and a right-hand twist, overall barrel length is 9.9 inches. A ratcheted muzzle nut protects threads designed to accept blank-firing attachment (*Platzpatronengerät*). MP 38s and early, transitional MP 40s were also fitted with a muzzle dust cap. The front sling swivel lies between the barrel nut and receiver. The rear end of the sling slips through a slot at the back of the grip-frame's extension.

The barrel bar is pinned to the front sight assembly, which holds a tapered blade. Windage zero can be adjusted by drifting the blade in its dovetail on the base. A sheet-metal hood has been pinned to the front sight's base. Two open, square-notch rear sights provide for elevations of 100 and 200 meters. When not in use, the 200-meter sight is flipped back to expose the fixed 100-meter sight. The rear sights are unprotected.

The MP 38/40's lower receiver exhibits its most startling departures from previous submachine-gun designs. Here, for the first time, we see a pistol grip, folding stock and the use of plastic instead of wood.

Both the MP 40's receiver end-cap and grip frame are sheet-metal pressings spot welded together. In 1943, Steyr, one of the MP 40's primary contractors, produced one-piece lower receiver units. They were among the last MP 40s ever manufactured.

The forearm and grip panels were molded under high pressure from a phenolic resin filled with long-fiber paper pulp, called "bakelite." The exterior surface of this lightweight, high-impact plastic was glass beaded to reduce glare. Grip-to-frame angle and the grip's overall configuration are excellent.

The folding stock consists of two sturdy steel rods, pivoted at their attachment to the grip frame's exten-

*Continued on page 86*

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**W**HEN people ask me what knife I'd carry if I could have only one to use as a tool or a weapon, the answer is easy — a Bowie knife. No other knife does so many things so well as does a properly made, properly balanced Bowie. I realize quite well that there are a lot of knife users and a lot of knifemakers who have a fondness for other designs and who favor smaller blades, but for across-the-board performance the Bowie is simply in a class by itself.

People today do not understand how well a proper Bowie knife works because they have never used a really good one. The trend toward lighter and smaller knives in the 1970s spawned a whole generation of knifemakers who quite frankly don't know how to make a Bowie with the proper bevels and balance. There is a whole lot more to a properly-made Bowie knife than meets the eye, and a good one is a remarkable instrument. Let's look at what this knife is all about.

In the world of cuts and cutting, there are a lot of different needs and different ways to address those needs. The factors involved in whittling on a stick are different than those in slicing a ham or a roast. Skinning an animal requires a different kind of cutting than does chopping tree limbs to build a litter or a shelter for the night. Small knives do have their place in the scheme of things, and a knife with a 4-inch blade will do well for cutting small things and skinning. But small knives are limited to making short cuts and cuts that don't require a lot of power.

If you doubt this, go to a meat market and watch a butcher break down a beef carcass. He starts off with a knife that has a long blade, 10 inches or more, for the long slicing cuts that this work requires at first. As the carcass breaks down into smaller pieces, he changes to smaller knives. In the same vein, if you need to cut trees as big around as your wrist and all you have is a knife with a 4-inch blade, you are going to be in for a very long afternoon. What it boils down to is simply that small knives in some cases will not make the large, heavy cuts that may be required — but a big knife *will* make a small cut when one is required.

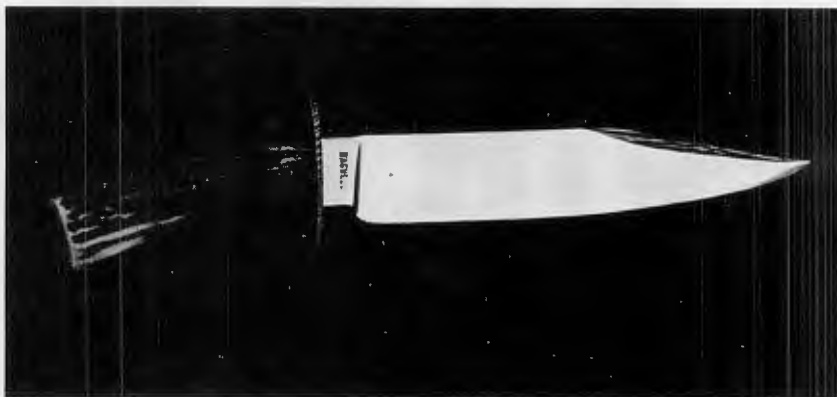
Enter the Bowie. The Bowie knife is unique among the tools and edged weapons of the world because it is capable of such a wide range of cuts. Consider the dagger, the kukri, the straight razor, the cleaver and the butcher knife. Each of these cutting implements has an area of specialization and a type of cutting that it does best. The dagger is a specialized stabbing implement; it does not slice or slash well, and does not chop at all.



# BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

## E-Tool to Deerskiner



**Classic Bowie knife — big, well-made, well-balanced — is in a class by itself. Photo: Bill Bagwell**

The kukri has tremendous chopping power and has slashing power to a limited degree, but it has no stabbing power and no backstroke capability. The straight razor will slice and slash, but that's it. The cleaver is limited solely to heavy chopping. The butcher knife will slice and slash, and it has some stabbing capability. Each of these specialized implements works well within its area of specialization, but none will make all of the cuts.

The Bowie is different. The Bowie knife will stab as well as a dagger, and make a larger wound channel in the process. The sharpened, concave, clip point gives the Bowie tremendous backstroke cutting capability unmatched by a dagger. The Bowie will chop as well as a kukri, and its single-edged, flat-ground blade will slice and slash as well as a razor. The Bowie is the *only* edged weapon that will make *all* of the important cuts and execute them as well as other knives designed specifically to make those cuts.

The Bowie knife was designed at a time when this country understood and appreciated knives. Firearms had not reached the state of perfection they enjoy today, and the knife was looked upon as a primary rather than a back-up weapon. Frontier America in the 1830s and '40s was a rough-and-

tumble place, a harsh environment of raging rivers and vast forests full of wild animals and wilder men. Towns and outposts were as bad if not worse, and a man had to be able to take care of himself on a moment's notice.

As an edged weapon, the Bowie knife was so efficient and effective that it displaced the sword cane and Spanish dagger, relegating them to oblivion almost overnight. Its effectiveness was so great and its use so widespread that by February of 1839 the state legislatures of Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee had passed legislation outlawing its use as a weapon. The Bowie was specifically named in those legislative acts; no other type of knife was universally prohibited as a means of self-defense. Not even the new Colt revolver was singled out in the ban.

Weapon function aside, one great reason for the success and popularity of the Bowie knife was its versatility as a tool. The American frontiersman travelled light and didn't load himself down with unnecessary equipment. In the Bowie he found an implement that would chop as well as a small ax, and the Bowie all but replaced the tomahawk as a belt-carried tool and weapon. Things such as wagon wheel spokes and ax handles were easily fashioned with the Bowie as the only available cutting tool, and its blade length made it quite possible to use it as a drawknife in an emergency.

*Continued on page 88*

**THE PLANNING'S COMPLETE, THE RESERVATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE,  
THE BAGS ARE PACKED — WE'RE OFF TO THE**

★ **8TH ANNUAL SOF CONVENTION AND EXPO**  
★ **SAHARA HOTEL, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**  
★ **AUGUST 26 THRU 30, 1987**  
★

For several months you've been reading about the 8th Annual SOF Convention and Expo and at last it's finally here. It's too late to register by mail but you can still be part of the action and adventure by registering at the convention in Las Vegas. Here's what your \$125.00 gets you:

- Entrance to the Seminars
- Entrance to the Firepower Demo
- An Awards Banquet ticket
- Entrance to the Weapons Expo and Three-Gun Match

And here's what the 1987 Convention and Expo has in store for you:

### **GUEST SPEAKER**

- SOF's Convention Banquet guest speaker will be the former U.S. Ambassador Lewis Tambs. As Ambassador to Colombia, Tambs was so effective in encouraging the host country to move against cocaine traffickers that the drug runners put out a \$1,000,000 contract on him. As Ambassador to Costa Rica, Tambs was involved in building support for the anti-communist Nicaraguan resistance.

### **WEAPONS EXPO**

- Conveniently located in the Sahara Space Center, the Weapons Expo will be filled with over 200 dealers and retailers selling and displaying state-of-the-art weapons, police and communications gear, survival equipment, knives and contemporary militaria. The Expo is open to the public and runs Friday, August 28 thru Sunday, August 30.

### **THREE-GUN MATCH**

- SOF Three-Gun International Combat Shooting Match, Desert Sportsman's Rifle and Pistol Club, August 26-28, 1987. Open to all persons legally able to possess firearms in the United States as well as foreign shooters of good character. The Three-Gun Match is patterned after military and police courses. Designed to test practical shooting skills with rifle, pistol and shotgun.

### **SEMINARS**

- Central America Update . . . . . Robert K. Brown
- SDI . . . . . Lt. Col. Frank Lewis, D.O.D.
- History/Goals of National Firearms Assoc. . . . . Jim Pongrass
- Counter-Terrorism . . . . . James Kolesnik
- The War in South Africa . . . . . Col. Terblanch, S.A.D.F.

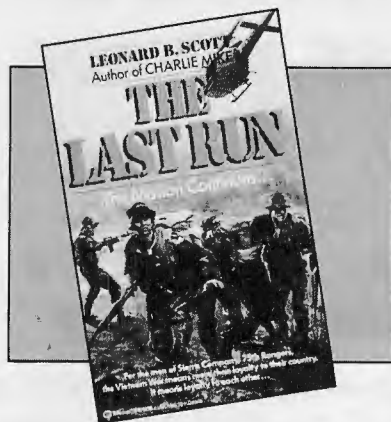
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- Submachine-Gun Shoot . . . . . Chuck Traynor
- The Defensive Edge Knife Tactics . . . . . Ernie Franco
- To name just a few!

***Don't miss out on any of the action and adventure —  
pack your bags today and head on out —  
we'll be waiting for you!***

**THE LAST RUN.** A novel by Leonard B. Scott. Ballantine Books, Dept. SOF, 201 E. 50th St., New York, NY 10022. 1987. 435 pages. Softcover. \$7.95. Review by John Coleman.



**W**HEN you pare away the opaque layers of bitterness and frustration that time and our guilt-ridden collective national memory have painted over our 20-plus year involvement in Vietnam, you're left with only the most basic concept known as combat. Bullet versus bullet, bayonet versus bayonet. It doesn't matter if you call it a war, a police action or a conflict. The unalterable fact is that men faced each other over gunsights and fought it.

Leonard B. Scott, an active-duty lieutenant colonel who pulled his bush time with the 173rd Airborne and the 75th Rangers, cuts right to the heart of that matter with his second book, **The Last Run**.

In this follow-up to his well-received first novel, **Charlie Mike** (see "In Review," SOF, May '86), Scott again concentrates on a subject he knows well: Rangers in combat in Vietnam. And contrary to the *modus operandi* of too many novelists, Scott refuses to stray into the currently in-vogue world of Vietnam War fiction where characters gush their personal angst during squad-level consciousness-raising sessions nearly every other page. Instead, Scott's professionals of Sierra Company, 75th Rangers, do what they went to war to do: find the enemy and, if the mission dictates, destroy them.

**The Last Run** isn't just another good-guys-versus-bad-guys, bullets-fly-and-blood-splatters novel, however. Scott looks at both sides of the fence and finds praise — and condemnation — for the U.S. and North Vietnamese military machines and the men who ran them. But his main concern, as it should be, is for the men on the ground: the Rangers — their role misunderstood, their assets generally misused — who pulled the recons, laid

## IN REVIEW



the ambushes and carried out the raids; and, with even-handed empathy, their adversaries of the NVA who earned their niche as rugged light infantrymen.

**The Last Run** is a simple book, and therein lies its strength. Leonard B. Scott writes with authenticity and clarity about men in combat, men who take the motto of "Rangers Lead the Way" at face value and without reservation. That dedication to duty may seem simplistic and archaic to politically minded armchair warriors, but it's the stuff that wins our battles and could win our wars.

Put on your patrol cap, settle back for a cover-to-cover combat recon and enjoy what may be the finest Vietnam War novel of 1987.

**REFLECTIONS ON THE WALL — The Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Photographs by the Smithsonian Institution's Office of Printing and Photographic Services. Introduction and narration by Edward Clinton Ezell. Stackpole Books, Dept. SOF, Cameron & Kelker Sts., P.O. Box 1831, Harrisburg, PA 17105. 1987. 160 pages. Hardcover. \$16.95. Review by J.D. Mayfield.**



**T**HE Smithsonian Institution's **Reflections on the Wall** is a book of photographs. The text is supplemental to the images. The 175 black-and-white photographs by Smithsonian staff photographers, interns and volunteers cover the 1982 National Salute at which the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated, the 1984 dedication of the supplemental soldier statue nearby, and the 1984 ceremonies sur-

rounding the burial of the Vietnam War Unknown. The brief introduction and the narrative sections accompanying the photographs were written by Edward Clinton Ezell, supervisor of the Division of Armed Forces History of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. The book contains brief forewords by Jan C. Scruggs and John P. Wheeler III, president and chairman, respectively, of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, and by retired U.S. Army General William C. Westmoreland, former commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam. There is also a foreword by James Quay, who was a conscientious objector during the war.

Deep emotion characterized America's reaction to the Vietnam War and, later, Americans' reaction to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The photographs in **Reflections on the Wall** therefore have the potential to evoke similarly deep emotion. It is extremely difficult — and perhaps even inappropriate — to undertake to review such a book of photographs, because photographs must be seen to evoke emotion and emotion is unique in each individual. I therefore do not recommend that you buy **Reflections on the Wall** or that you not buy it. I do recommend that you seek it out and decide for yourself — based on whatever emotion its photographs evoke in you — whether to buy it or not.

**THE GERMAN ASSAULT RIFLE 1935-1945.** By Peter R. Senich. Paladin Press, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306. 1987. 311 pages, more than 300 photographs and drawings, bibliography. Hardcover. \$42.95 postpaid. Review by Bill Brooks.

**P**PETER R. SENICH is recognized as one of the world's foremost authorities on the history of German military sniping weapons systems and their tactical application. Senich has now turned his expertise toward the German assault weapons systems, and it is about time.

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*Continued on page 90*



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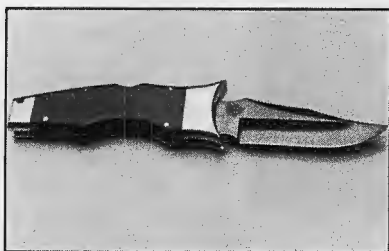
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Prices start at \$19.95 for the Flexi-Light, \$24.95 for Strobe-Light, and \$44.95 for Night Star. All are available from Alupower, Dept. SOF, 6 Claremont Road, Bernardsville, NJ 07924. Call toll-free to order, 1-800-334-8196.



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# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER



by Tom Slizewski



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Contact O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Dept. SOF, 7 Grasso Ave., North Haven, CT 06473 for complete information.

## SOLAR NI-CADS

Here's one for the "why didn't someone think of this before" department. MJR Company recently introduced SN 2000 solar rechargeable batteries. These are standard size "D" batteries fitted with solar panels. They'll work wherever "D" batteries are used, and they'll charge continuously while exposed to either natural or artificial light.

To complement the batteries, MJR is also offering the SN 2000 flashlight. This is a standard rugged military flashlight with a clear barrel to allow the batteries to charge without removing them. It takes approximately 20 hours under a light source to charge a drained battery to full capacity. Batteries are sold uncharged for \$10.00 plus \$2.50 shipping. The flashlight is available for \$39.98 plus \$2.98 shipping (includes two batteries). Before ordering, call for the SOF reader discount price.

Contact: MJR, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 30355, Phoenix, AZ 85046; phone 602-483-9693. ✉

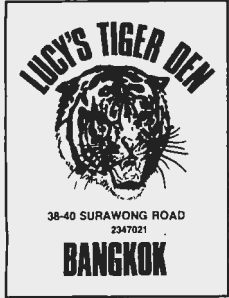




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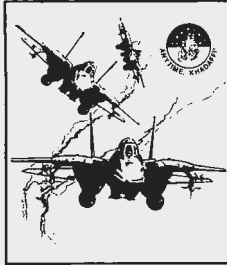
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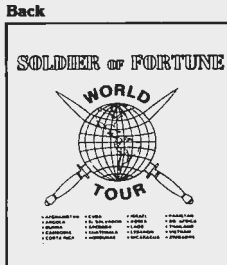
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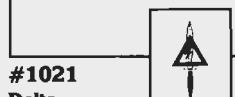
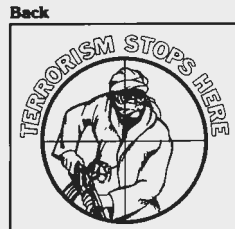
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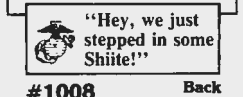
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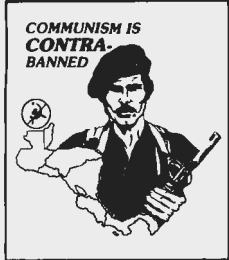
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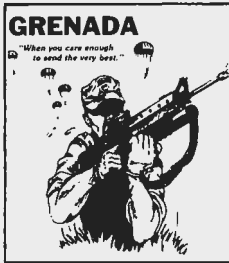
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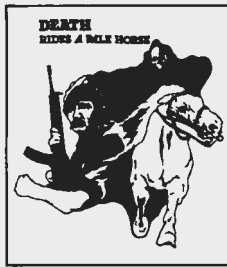
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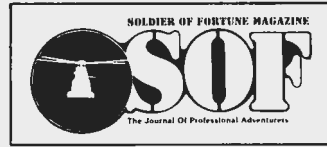
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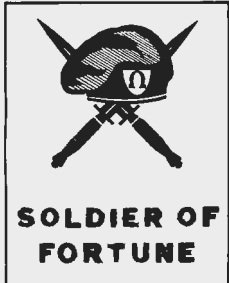
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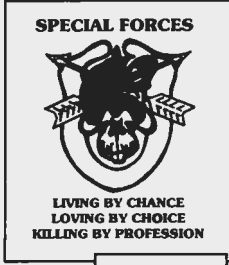
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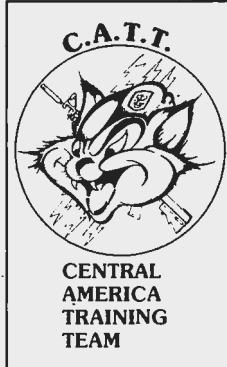
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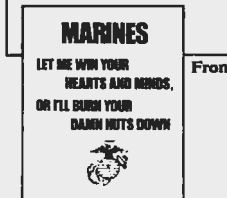
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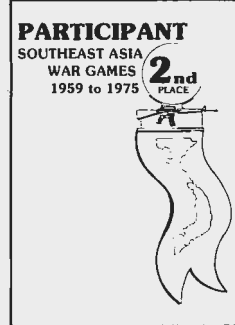
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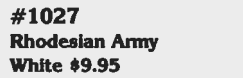
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**S**CENE: the briefing room. A hard-bitten, battle-scarred commando type, face blackened and dressed in camouflage, jabs his finger down on the map spread across a table. The camera pans across the faces of six other troops similarly dressed, eyes glued on their leader.

"This is the target," the commando leader rasps, pudgy finger squashed over a grid square of the 1:250,000 topo map. "Enemy HQ guarded by 200 crack troops."

He gives his men a hard, tough look, grabs his M16 and barks: "Let's go get 'em, boys."

Cut to enemy headquarters deep behind the lines. Like a well-oiled machine, the commando raiders systematically blow up, demolish and kill everything in sight — with a never-ending supply of bullets and bangs.

Cut to our hero and his "boys" receiving medals. The now even more battle-scarred commando leader hawks a stream of tobacco juice off the edge of the screen and grunts: "'Twam't nothin', sir."

Sound familiar? Seen it in a hundred movies and TV shows? Does it bear any resemblance to real life?

Like hell it does.

Those celluloid commandos wouldn't even have found the front gate with that sort of mission planning, much less have been able to attack and destroy a defended target. Combat leaders plan, study, analyze, formulate and nitpick every operation in fine detail before it's set into motion. When time allows, they'll take days, weeks, even months making sure that every contingency is thought out, every scrap of information collected, every action rehearsed — all to ensure the mission's success. Anything less will often mean failure — and death.

To standardize this planning sequence, most of the world's armies have developed what is often termed the Five Paragraph Field Order, or simply the Ops Order. It's concise and flexible enough to cover nearly any mission imaginable, be it raid, patrol, ambush or even invasion. As the ad says, don't leave home without it.

The basic format of the ops order consists of five paragraphs covering situation, mission, execution, administration and logistics, and command and signal. Let's look at each one in turn.

In essence, the **situation** paragraph covers friendly and enemy forces. Enemy force intelligence should include — naturally — strengths, location and firepower, but there's more to it than that. If possible, you should include such detail as the quality of the opposition (conscripts, elite forces, foreign advisers capable of



# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by John Coleman

## Ops Order: Don't Leave Home Without It



**Operations planning means the difference between success or failure — and life or death. To successfully execute any mission, every member of the unit and the unit as a whole must be equipped with information outlined in the Five Paragraph Field Order — the Ops Order.**

organizing a defense, irregular troops, police border guards), as well as uniforms and equipment worn, schedules (when do guard shifts change, when do they eat, normal daily activity), and one of the most important but overlooked factors — enemy morale.

If your target is guarded by underpaid, underfed, generally abused and far-from-home draftees, there's a damned good chance they'll melt away in the face of a shock-action attack. Elite formations, on the other hand, may require elaborate diversionary tactics or quiet infiltration by specially trained sappers.

Three other factors — civilian population, terrain and weather — should also fall under the enemy forces section. Local civilians, ostensibly friendly or otherwise, should be avoided if possible, but you may run into them. Your team should be aware of their habits, dress and ability to com-

municate with the outside world — all to enable you to deal with them if contact is made.

Weather — moon phase, cloud cover, temperature, precipitation — is a critical factor in every operation. Even more important, terrain can determine the success or failure of a mission. Swampy ground, numerous rivers or streams (during dry or wet seasons), mountains, open savannah, built-up areas, and type of foliage (poison oak or ivy, elephant grass, thick forest or jungle) and wildlife (poisonous snakes, mud hornets' nests) will all affect timing, routes of travel and physical condition of the patrol upon arrival at the target area.

Much of this information may be available from current maps, almanacs, newspapers and even encyclopedias, but it may be necessary to send out a preliminary reconnaissance patrol to obtain the rest if tactically possible.

Don't forget to include information on any other friendly forces which may be operating in or around the target area. If you have any fire support available in the form of aircraft or indirect fire weapons, make sure the troops are aware of it. (Troops always perform much better when they know this stuff's available to them.)

The **mission** paragraph explains in

concise terms exactly what is to be accomplished. For example, "This team will destroy the radio transmitter at coordinates Bravo 109." No "we will try to destroy" or "we will blow up" — you're going to destroy the place and that's it. Each man must understand mission requirements so that if he's the last one left alive, he knows in no uncertain terms what has to get done.

With the mission clearly defined, the **execution** paragraph explains how it will be carried out. This is the guts of the entire ops order sequence and will obviously take the most time to develop and explain.

It begins with a brief, general explanation of what's going to happen, so each will understand the general concept of the plan. Keep it simple at this stage.

Taking the earlier raid mission as an example, the briefing may run like this: "This team will depart at 2300 and move on compass bearings to a point five kilometers from the target. We'll base up during the day, and that night I'll lead a team to recon the transmitter site. We'll destroy the target the next night, then move on bearings back to this location."

Now move on to explain details of the mission, giving enough information so that every man will know exactly what part he is to play.

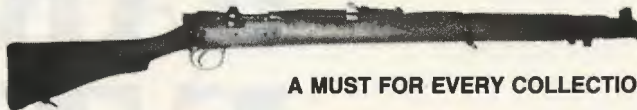
For example, a 12-man raiding patrol will have assault, security and fire support teams, and each team will be given a specific function. Each man will be assigned to a team and told what his particular job will be. Two men in the assault section may be tasked with emplacing explosives; two others may be assigned to take out sentries and then search for documents. Furthermore, individuals may draw such tasks as compassmen during the trek in and out, team medic or stretcher bearer, radioman, interpreter/interrogator, or prisoner guard.

Following this assignment of team and individual tasks, move on to explain coordinating instructions affecting the entire patrol. These will include timing; types of formations during travel; primary and alternate routes in and out, along with compass bearings and distances; actions the patrol will take at halts, during obstacle crossings and on unplanned enemy contact; and locations of rendezvous points in case the patrol becomes separated. Different missions will call for different actions (a fighting patrol looks for enemy contact, while a raiding or recon patrol will try to avoid it), and you must tailor your orders accordingly.

The most detailed section in the execution phase should cover your ac-

*Continued on page 89*

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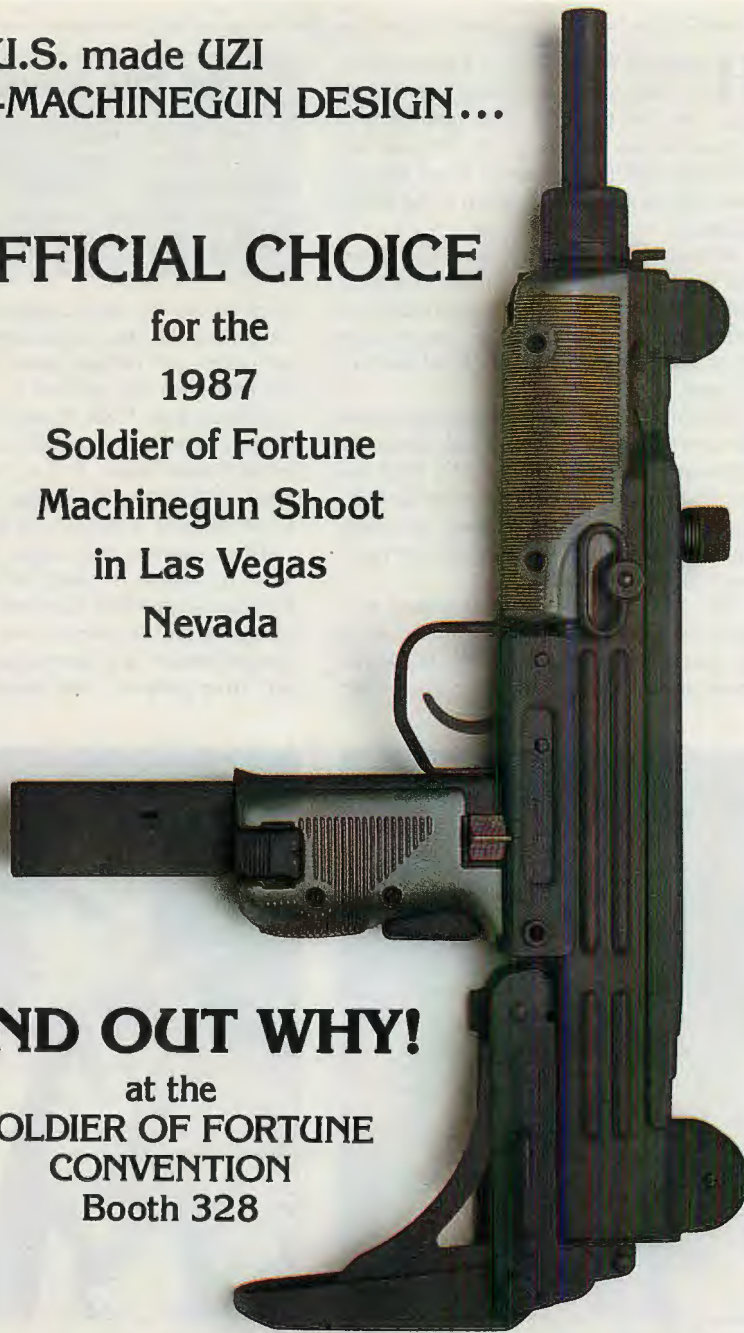
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# HAROLD W. EZELL

**SOF INTERVIEW**

## Immigration's Man With a Mission

Text by Isaac Staats Photos by Jeffrey Junkins

**H**AROLD W. EZELL is a man with a mission. As the western regional commissioner for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, the 49-year-old self-made millionaire never stops talking about the illegal-alien invasion of the United States.

He worries about the impact illegal aliens will have on this country, about how they will cause the quality of life in America to deteriorate. And he articulates his feelings often with finger-pointing, hand-waving gestures.

Since the Reagan Administration appointed the second-generation native Californian as INS commissioner in March 1983, Ezell has become the most outspoken advocate for U.S. Border Patrol agents and the most outspoken critic of congressional inaction on immigration reform in INS history.

The hard-charging commissioner will speak anywhere in the country on the need for immigration reform. Often he works seven days a week. On any night of the

### ON THE BORDER

Isaac Staats writes on law enforcement subjects from his home base in San Diego County, California. He wrote "Border Legend," which appeared in the July '87 SOF.

week he can be found conducting personal tours along the Mexican border for citizens, politicians and military brass, demonstrating how large the problem is.

In fiscal year 1986, Border Patrol agents arrested more than 1.6 million illegal aliens in the United States. In San Diego County alone, 630,000 were arrested, compared to 6,500 arrested in San Diego during 1966.

Those numbers upset Ezell. And his personal frustration increases when he sees a Democrat-controlled Congress continually refuse to initiate immigration reform, as congressmen bow to intense lobbying pressure from growers, labor unions and com-

panies which employ illegal aliens.

SOF recently caught up with the quick-moving Ezell in San Diego, following an all-day staff meeting with top-ranking western region INS officials. Following the interview, Ezell went to dinner, where he spoke on immigration reform. Later that night, he conducted yet another tour along the U.S./Mexican border.

**SOF: From the Immigration and Naturalization Service perspective, what do you personally feel is the most serious problem confronting the United States today?**

**EZELL:** I believe it is the borders that are out of control. The borders that are allowing the drugs, the illegal aliens, terrorists, whatever, to come in. Our borders are really out of control.

I think what is needed is a massive movement by the American public to get up in arms and say, "Look, we've had it. We're



**"I believe that as a nation in the next five or ten years, if we don't do something, we're going to become a Third World country."**



**"Instead of Congress worrying about putting fences around the halls of Congress . . . they ought to be worried about the borders."**



**"Our agency is the only agency in the world in border control enforcement that protects illegal aliens from other illegal aliens."**

not going to take this anymore. Our borders have to come under control."

There has to be immigration reform, has to be the war on drugs that the president has called for.

**SOF: What kind of immigration reform are you talking about?**

EZELL: The changes have to come through three major things: One, there have to be sanctions against employers that knowingly hire illegal aliens. Two, we've got to take away every kind of benefit, whatever magnet we have that would draw these people here. We've got to make sure they can't get [those entitlement benefits] unless they are here legally.

There's a mandated program called SAVE — Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement. That program has to be part of immigration reform.

Our projections are billions of dollars that will be saved by taxpayers if every alien had to have their status verified by whatever agency was giving out the money. That's got to be mandatory. You just can't go in and say, "I need help," and not pay the piper.

In other words, show your papers. Show that you're legally here. To me, it's essential. Those two things would help us tremendously, along with additional resources to get our borders under control by our Border Patrol and by our INS district offices.

I think the other major problem facing this nation is not only illegal aliens but the drug issue. . . . They're all part of the same problem — the borders are out of control.

**SOF: How many people are legally given citizenship every year?**

EZELL: We bring in, legally, 600,000 people. Now you take all the nations in the world, you put them all together . . . all their immigration . . . and double it — that's what we do as a nation by ourselves, 600,000.

**SOF: What figures do you have on the apprehension of illegal aliens?**

EZELL: For the last three years, we've apprehended more than 1,000,000 illegal aliens along the southern border alone. This year we're going to apprehend 1,800,000 along the southern border alone. . . . But even those we get keep trying until they get by us.

**SOF: A few months ago you said that if this problem continued unabated, you felt the United States faced becoming a Third World country itself. Do you still feel that way?**

EZELL: I believe that as a nation in the next five or ten years, if we don't do something, we're going to become a Third World country. What I mean by that is the majority of your population are from Third World countries, here illegally, and most of them are illiterate and most of them are bringing diseases with them and they're bringing all of the problems found in a Third World country.

They have no health examination when

they come here. We have communicable diseases coming in here that heretofore have been stamped out. Who ever heard of tuberculosis in the last five or ten years?

**SOF: In the United States?**

EZELL: You're hearing it now, in the United States. There are other kinds of communicable diseases. Leprosy . . . we have leprosy starting to show up in various parts of the country.

**SOF: Recently, San Diego County Sheriff John F. Duffy recommended putting the military on the border as a means of closing the border to illegal immigration into the United States. What do you think of that?**

EZELL: I believe the use of the military on the borders is the last option. We must do something as far as reforming our laws, putting more resources on the border, doing those things that we can do within the present make-up of our border enforcement program. The military, I believe, is a last option, a last resort.

If something does not happen, I believe the American public is going to demand the military.

**SOF: What about building some sort of barrier along the border?**

EZELL: I think that in certain areas we've got to have some kind of a barrier. We've tried the thing first referred to . . . as the "Tortilla Curtain," the fence in El Paso and the fence in San Diego. The problem with that is it is so easily torn down by illegal aliens wanting to come through.

**SOF: What is the total manpower of the Border Patrol?**

EZELL: About 3,200 for the entire 1,940 miles on the south and everything on the north. We [as a nation] have not been serious about controlling the borders. The Reagan Administration gave us 1,000 new positions, of which 850 were Border Patrol



**"I'm personally scared about America's future unless we do something about the borders being out of control."**

positions and 150 were support positions, which came to us in fiscal year 1985. That's been a tremendous help, but it is not enough. It's maybe only about a fourth of what's really needed.

**SOF: What do you feel is your biggest roadblock to successfully fighting this problem? Is it Congress? Is it local governments?**

EZELL: I maintain that if the Capitol was built on the overlook across from the "Soccer Field" [an increasingly infamous area just north of Tijuana, on U.S. soil, where 500 to 1,500 illegal aliens gather nightly to await darkness before moving on farther north], that we'd have had immigration reform a long time ago. Instead of Congress worrying about putting fences around the halls of Congress . . . they ought to be worried about the borders.

Special interest groups seem to have greater pressure on congressmen than the voters.

**SOF: What special interest groups are you talking about?**

EZELL: We're talking about the growers, talking about some of the unions, some of the business community that enjoys the "apartheid" system of illegal alien workers. We've got an apartheid system in America.

**SOF: Explain that.**

EZELL: The apartheid in America is the illegal alien worker who works for less, who puts up with working conditions that are less than acceptable to an American citizen or a legal alien. They'll work long hours. They will not complain because they know that whatever they're getting here is much better than what they could get wherever they came from. That doesn't make it right.

If you [as an employer] have got a six-dollar-an-hour job that you should be paying, does that make it right that you can get somebody [an illegal alien] for three or two, and draw the wages down for everybody else? That doesn't make it right.

So we have our own apartheid system. These people are locked into it and they can't get out. We need sanctions against the apartheid system in America.

**SOF: When you say that, a lot of your opponents will say, "What's going to happen to the price of fruit, of vegetables?" Will the prices then indeed rise to exorbitant levels? Will a can of corn go from 59 cents to two dollars?**

EZELL: I believe that we must have a guest worker program for seasonal crop industries.

You bring alien workers in, pay them, send them back with the money when you are finished with them. You bring them in through a legal guest worker program.

**SOF: One thing you have mentioned in recent months is the increase in violence directed against Border Patrol agents. What about that?**

EZELL: I believe the violence is at an all-time high along the southern border, in

*Continued on page 90*

**SOF EXCLUSIVE**

# GUNS BEHIND THE GREAT WALL

## SOF Scoops the CIA ... Again

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



**ABOVE LEFT:** PLA officer adjusts electronic equipment used in SOF's test and evaluation of PRC military small arms. Digital readout indicates numerical value of score and location of impact on target. Weapon tested here is Type 81 assault rifle.  
**ABOVE RIGHT:** Firing the Type 81 rifle with 75-round drum.

*Publisher's note: SOF in communist China? You've got to be kidding. We've been to a lot of weird places during the last 12 years, but we never thought we'd be jogging the Great Wall, firing PRC small arms and eating bizarre, "I don't want to know" parts of plants, fish and fowl at the invitation of the Chinese Communist government. But then that's how it is with SOF.*

SOF was approached by contacts from the PRC about a year and a half ago to test and evaluate a number of small arms never before seen outside the Bamboo Curtain. Now, we've never been moderate about our anti-communist position in general, and have never been enthusiastic about the PRC's form of government in particular. We fought them in Korea. They backed the North Vietnamese and Robert Mugabe's terrorists in Rhodesia. No love lost there.

*But times and governments change. SOF decided to adopt "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" concept. It would also appear that so have the Chinese. After all, for all its warts and past sins, the PRC is fighting the Vietnamese on its borders, aiding the anti-communists in Cambodia and Laos, and providing large quantities of Russian-killing items to the Afghan freedom fighters. (In April 1985, when we were training the contras, we saw a half-million PRC-manufactured 7.62x39mm rounds in a contra base camp. How they got there, we don't know.) And, conspiracy theorists notwithstanding, the Chinese are no friends of the Soviets. Neither, of course, are we.*

*But why SOF? Why not International Defense Review, Jane's, Armed Forces Journal or any of a number of prestigious military trade magazines? Or, they could have*

*invited a number of journalists from various publications if in fact the PRC's main objective was to gain maximum exposure for its line of small arms for military sales. We wouldn't get an answer to that mystery until we got to China.*

*My curiosity as to why we were chosen prompted me to call a number of foreign affairs experts. One source speculated it was some "Byzantine Chinese plot" with unknown objectives. General Jack Singlaub quoted an old Chinese proverb: "It is better to sit down across a table from an enemy you know than a friend you don't know." A well-known international defense consultant and military author agreed with Singlaub, stating, "The PRC would rather sit down with a known, hard-core anti-communist than a wishy-washy liberal. If Carter had been president, no rapproche-*

ment would have been effected with the PRC by a Jimmy Carter-type president. The Chinese knew where Nixon stood and therefore felt comfortable in dealing with him."

There were questions to be answered, mysteries to solve and weapons to fire. It was time to go.

**W**ITH a strength of some 3,625,000 regulars, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China is the largest in the world. This is a most misleading statistic.

Undermechanized and largely equipped with outdated weaponry at all levels, the PLA is primarily a foot-mobile army that would find itself at a severe disadvantage were it to engage the Soviet Union in a major military confrontation at this time.

However, the recent move from a previously Leninist society to "market socialism" has provided the PLA with an important opportunity to upgrade its military potential through importation of Western technology and the development of indigenous designs. Western authorities still regard the Chinese defense industry as geared to the production of Soviet copies dating back to the 1950s. As we shall see, this assessment no longer holds true, at least in the area of military small arms.

Adopted in 1984 by the PLA, the new Type 81 assault rifle and Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) represent convincing proof that PRC designers are acutely tuned to the combat user's requirements and are fully capable of executing designs that incorporate time-proven concepts with numerous innovative features.

Let's first take a close look at the PRC's new assault rifle, which up to now has only been described, inaccurately, by *Jane's Defence Weekly*.

#### Type 81 Assault Rifle

Chambered for the ubiquitous 7.62x39mm cartridge, the Type 81 series (which refers to the year development commenced, in this case 1981) is gas operated and fires from the closed-bolt position. Equipped with either a fixed or folding stock (designated Type 81-1), the weights, empty, are 7.5 pounds and 7.7 pounds, respectively. This is somewhat heavier than the AKM. Overall length is 38.2 inches, regardless of stock. With the stock folded, this is reduced to 29.2 inches. Except for the bolt group, which is phosphate finished, and the hard-chromed gas components, all metal surfaces have been salt blued.

Both weapons in the Type 81 series have adjustable gas regulators marked "1," "0" and "2." The "0" position is used for launching rifle grenades with ballistite (blank) ammunition. The "1" position is used for normal conditions and "2" is the adverse setting. The base of a cartridge case is used to rotate the regulator. Setting "1" provides a cyclic rate of 650 rpm. This is increased by approximately 100 rpm at the "2" position, unless the weapon is badly fouled.



PRC Type 81 rifle, caliber 7.62x39mm, fieldstripped with sling and 30-round magazine.

### TYPE 81 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** ..... 7.62x39mm
- Operation:** ..... Gas operated with adjustable three-position regulator; piston not attached to bolt carrier. Locking by means of rotary two-lug bolt. Fire from the closed-bolt position.
- Cyclic rate:** ..... Varies with gas regulator setting: 650 rpm with regulator set to position "1," 740 rpm at position "2."
- Feed:** ..... Detachable 75-round spring-wound drum or 30-round staggered box-type magazine. Not interchangeable with Kalashnikov magazines.
- Weight, empty:** ..... 7.5 pounds (rifle); 7.7 pounds (Type 81-1 folding-stock rifle); 11.4 pounds (SAW).
- Length, overall:** ..... 38.2 inches (rifle); 29.2 inches (Type 81-1, stock folded); 40.2 inches (SAW).
- Barrel:** ..... Four-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.6 inches. Chrome-plated chamber and bore.
- Barrel length:** ..... 17.6 inches (rifle); 20.8 inches (SAW).
- Sights:** ..... Hooded, round front post; adjustable for windage and elevation zero. Open, square-notch rear; adjustable for elevation from 100 to 500 meters (SAW: 600 meters) in 100-meter increments by means of knurled range drums on either side which lift or lower sight bar on their eccentric axis pin. SAW uses notch in top bar of rear sight assembly for engagement at 700-800 meters.
- Finish:** ..... Metal components salt-blued, except for phosphated bolt and carrier and hard-chromed gas regulator and piston head.
- Furniture:** ..... Wood, either mahogany- (rifle) or walnut- (SAW) stained with varnish finish.
- Accessories:** ..... Bayonet (rifle only), rifle grenades (rifle only), sling, cleaning kit and spare parts.
- Status:** ..... Currently in production; adopted for service in the People's Liberation Army in 1984.
- Manufacturer:** ..... PRC government arsenals.
- Exporter:** ..... Poly Technologies, Inc., Dept. SOF, 5/F, Citic Building, 19, Jian Guo Men Wai Street, Beijing, People's Republic of China.
- T&E summary:** ..... With 80 percent parts interchangeability, an excellent example of a modern infantry squad weapons system; based upon highly reliable Kalashnikov-type locking; adequate accuracy potential; low cyclic rate permits short-burst fire; low perceived recoil with high hit probability; cost effective; SAW needs quick-change barrel and improved heat shield.



PRC Type 81 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) with 75-round drum is fired from the prone position by SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown.

**TOP: PRC Type 81 SAW (background) with Type 74 squad machine gun in foreground.**

**ABOVE: SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown fires the PRC Type 74 squad machine gun.**

The retracting handle, shaped like that of the SKS, is permanently attached to the right side of the bolt carrier and reciprocates with it.

The receiver has been fabricated from a pinned and riveted, sheet-metal U-section. Missing are the small depressions over the magazine on each side of the receiver, which serve as magazine guides on the AKM. The sheet-metal receiver cover has four transverse ribs in the manner of the Soviet AKM. A projection on the end of the guide rod, quite different in appearance from that of the AKM, locks the receiver cover in place.

Type 81 series barrels have four grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.6 inches. Bores and chambers are chrome plated. The rifle barrels are 17.6 inches long and have been fitted with a muzzle brake

combined with gas rings for grenade launching. This appears to be integral with the bayonet lug, front sight assembly and gas block.

Front sight units are standard Kalashnikov. Adjustable for elevation and windage zero, the post-type front sight rests within a protective hood with a hole in the top for insertion of an adjustment tool. An open square-notch rear sight has been attached to the front end of the receiver, above the chamber. Rotation of a knurled knob on either side of the sight base raises or lowers the sight leaf in 100-meter increments from 100 to 500 meters (far more realistic than the 800- and 1,000-meter settings found on the AK-47 and AKM).

The selector switch has been moved to the left side of the receiver by placing the Kalashnikov's sheet-metal bar selector inside the receiver on the left side. This thumb-operated manual lever mimics that of the M16, except that the three positions (marked "1," "2" and "0") are the mirror image of the M16's and their location is thus ergonomically incorrect. When set to safe ("0"), the lever must be pulled rearward, first to full auto ("2") and then to semiauto-

matic ("1"). These positions should be transposed so that pushing forward will move the lever off safe into the semiauto mode and then into full auto.

The magazine-well, equipped with a flapper-type magazine release taken from the Kalashnikov, will accept either a steel 30-round box magazine or 75-round drum. Unless altered, neither can be inserted into a Kalashnikov-series weapon. A raised edge on the box magazine's follower activates a spring-loaded hold-open inside the receiver. This is a useful feature, omitted on the Kalashnikov series. The hold-open is inoperative when the drum is used. Both magazine and drum must be rolled rearward into the locked position in the magazine-well.

Primarily intended for use with the Type 81 SAW, the drum outwardly resembles the Soviet 75-round RPK drum, but its internal mechanism is partly derived from the Soviet 71-round PPSH-41 submachine-gun drum.

To charge the PRC Type 81 drum, first open the hinged back cover. Depress the spring-tension release button at the center of the drum and rotate the spindle clockwise until the cartridge carrier stops at the end of the spiral track. Load five rounds, bullets



down, into their slots on the outer rack, immediately to the right of the magazine's feed slot. Hold the spindle and rotate the spring-tension knob one complete revolution. Release the spindle slowly and allow the five cartridges to move up into the feed slot. Drop in the remaining 70 rounds. Close the rear cover and secure the latches.

This drum can be stored loaded, but unwound, for an indefinite period. Only six more complete revolutions of the key winder on the outside of the drum are required to ready the drum for firing. Modified to function in all Kalashnikov derivatives, the Type 81 drum is available from Keng's Firearms Specialty, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 6030 Ga. Hwy. 85, Suite 222, Riverdale, GA 30274; phone 404-996-2079).

Consisting of the buttstock, pistol grip and handguards, the wood furniture on the Type 81 series is either walnut- (SAW) or mahogany- (rifle) stained and with a varnish finish. The pistol grip has eight longitudinal grooves, rather crudely cut, on each side. The upper handguard contains an open, sheet-metal piston housing that also serves as a heat shield. Sling swivels are attached to the front of the handguard and buttstock,



**Type 81 bayonet can be attached only to rifle. Note unusual double fullers ("blood grooves") on the spear-point blade.**



**Type 81 series gas regulator is easily adjusted with the base of a cartridge, even while hot.**

both on the left side. A green web sling with leather end tabs and aluminum mounting studs is standard issue. A cleaning rod rides under the barrel, partially housed in the lower handguard.

The side-folding stock has been taken from one of PRC's AKS variants. This stock's skeletonized frame has been fabricated from a single piece of heavy-gauge sheet metal with five horizontal ribs stamped into the buttplate. A 4.75-inch long, bright reddish-brown plastic panel on each side of the stock hides the cleaning kit (depress a small, spring-loaded pin protruding through the top stock strut to remove the kit containing a bore brush, jag tip and combo tool). These panels have ribbed gripping surfaces and are retained by a threaded screw and pin.

This entire assembly is securely attached to the latch mechanism, which is operated by a checkered, spring-loaded button-release on top of the latch. Press down on the button and the stock can be swung to the



PRC Type 81 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW), fieldstripped with 75-round drum and cleaning kit.

## TYPE 81 METHOD OF OPERATION

A two-lug rotary bolt of the Kalashnikov type has been employed on both the Type 81 assault rifle and Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW). Operation is as follows: After ignition of the primer and propellant, gases are diverted through the gas block on top of the barrel and into the three-position regulator. The piston, in this case not connected to the bolt carrier and with a short, multiple-strand, helical spring wrapped around its shaft, is driven rearward to strike the bolt carrier. The bolt carrier goes through the necessary amount of free-play travel until the gas pressure drops to a safe level. A cam slot milled into the bolt carrier engages the bolt's cam stud and rotates the bolt about 35 degrees to unlock it from the barrel extension's locking recesses. As there is no primary extraction, a large extractor claw is required.

When the bolt carrier travels back, it rolls the hammer over and compresses the recoil spring, which together with its guide rod rides in a hollow in the rear of the carrier. The bolt ceases its rearward travel by slamming into the rear end of the receiver. The recoil spring then drives the bolt forward, another round is stripped from the magazine (or drum) and chambered, and the bolt then comes to rest. The bolt carrier continues on-

ward for about 5.5mm after locking has been completed. The piston returns to the regulator's cup under the force of its own spring.

Except for the selector system, a trigger mechanism of the Kalashnikov-type has been utilized, although the components are not interchangeable. Based on the firing mechanism of the M1 Garand, the hammer has two contact surfaces to engage a primary and auxiliary sear.

When cocked, the hammer is held back by the primary sear, which is part of the trigger lever. In semiautomatic fire, when the hammer is rolled back by the recoiling bolt carrier, it is caught by the auxiliary sear (spring-loaded by a single-strand coil). When the trigger is released, the primary sear moves back to catch the hammer as the auxiliary sear is rotated clear.

In full-auto fire, the auxiliary sear is rotated out of contact with the hammer. As long as the trigger is depressed, firing is controlled by the auto safety sear. The auto safety sear, a spring-loaded (single-strand coil) lever, is operated by the counter-recoiling bolt carrier and permits the hammer to fall on the inertia (non-spring-loaded) firing pin only after the carrier is fully forward. There is no anti-bounce device of the type encountered on the Soviet AKM. The hammer spring is a multiple-strand coil. Trigger pull weight on the specimen we tested was a scratchy 5.5 pounds.

right, where it locks in the closed position by means of the same latch mechanism. No locking hook is thus required on the receiver body. The button must be depressed again to open the stock. While the release button is easily depressed, the latch mechanism is quite substantial, helping make this stock every bit as stable as the rigid wooden butt-

stock.

The Type 81 bayonet (available from Keng's Firearms Specialty, Inc. for \$50) represents a somewhat startling departure from the AKM style (see "ComBloc Bayonets," SOF, April '87). Although the pommel, grips and crosspiece resemble those of the 2nd-pattern AKM bayonet, they

are thinner; this bayonet cannot be fitted to a Kalashnikov. Even more unusual is the plated, spear-point, unsharpened blade which has double fullers (so-called "blood



ABOVE: Rear sight assembly on Type 81 rifle provides a realistic maximum elevation of 500 meters. Note retracting handle, which resembles that of the SKS.

BELOW: Wood pistol grip of Type 81 series has eight crudely cut longitudinal grooves on each side.



grooves") on each side and appears to be little more than a flattened and shortened version of the PRC cruciform spike bayonet. Dubious features, such as saw-teeth and wire cutters, have been omitted. The blade is 6.7 inches long and the overall length is 11.8 inches. The green plastic scabbard has an aluminum mouthpiece and plastic bell hanger. There is no provision for attaching this bayonet to the Type 81 SAW.

### Type 81 SAW

While more than 80 percent of the Type 81 assault rifle's reciprocating components are interchangeable with those of the Type 81 squad machine gun, there remain some significant differences. Although unfortunately not of the quick-change type, the Type 81 SAW's barrel is longer (20.8 inches), giving the weapon an overall length of 40.2 inches, and heavier, bringing the weight, empty, up to 11.4 pounds. The added barrel length only increases the 7.62x39mm cartridge's muzzle velocity by 50 fps (to a total of 2,411 fps). Cyclic rates remain essentially the same.

Potential for grenade launching has been removed and an RPD-type muzzle nut attached in the AK-47 manner. An RPD-type, non-adjustable bipod has been

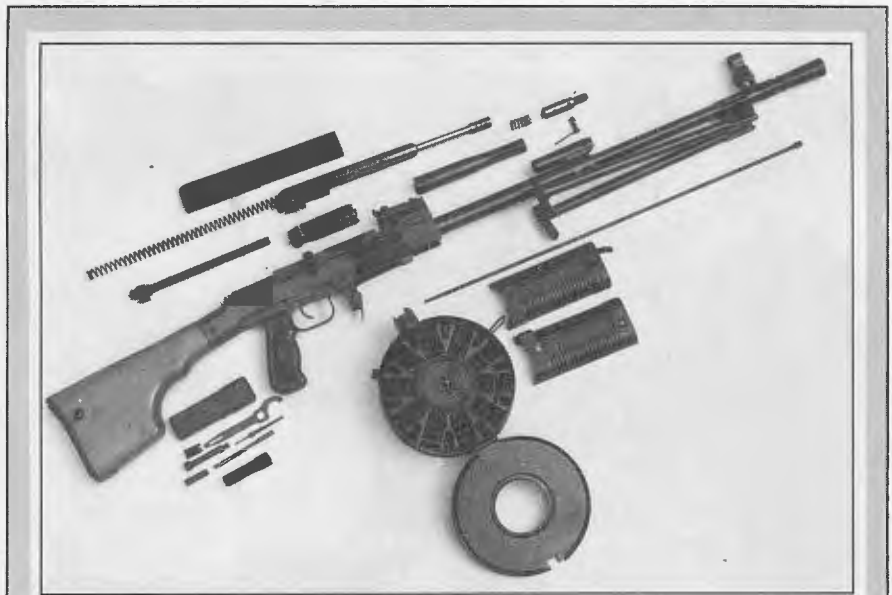
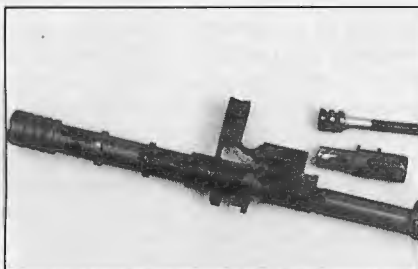
mounted at the muzzle end of the barrel. The front sight remains the same. A 600-meter elevation increment has been added to the rear sight, and a square notch cut into the rear sight assembly's top crossbar is used to engage targets at 700 to 800 meters. A wooden carrying handle with three spring-locked positions is fixed to the rear sight base on the left side. Buttstock and buttplate configurations are also derived from the RPD. A plastic box within the butt trap contains a combo wrench, two disassembly punches, broken case extractor, front sight adjustment tool, bore brush and jag tip for the cleaning rod.

Disassembly procedures of both Type 81 weapons are identical to the Kalashnikov series, with the following exception. To disassemble the gas system, first rotate the rear sight elevation knobs past the highest elevation setting. Lift up the upper handguard and heat shield from the rear end and separate them from the gas regulator. Rotate the gas regulator either to the right or left, past the numbered positions, and withdraw it from the gas block. Draw the piston and spring forward and remove.

SOF's test team fired hundreds of rounds through both the Type 81 rifle and SAW. There were no stoppages of any kind. Both weapons have excellent handling characteristics. Perceived recoil and muzzle jump were minimal. At either cyclic rate, the test team had no trouble in consistently firing two- to three-shot bursts. Burst-fire hit probability is quite high. Accuracy testing was conducted using targets electronically monitored by equipment developed and manufactured in the PRC. Both weapons are capable of firing semiautomatic groups of 3 to 4 MOA (minutes of angle), about all you can expect from a sheet-metal receiver. Ejection is typically violent and most of the empty cases sail at least 20 feet to the right front.

During sustained-fire tests, the Type 81 SAW's upper handguard became hot and started to smoke. An improved heat shield and quick-change barrel would eliminate this fire hazard. Altering the selector's sequence of positions is the only other modification I can suggest. Overall, this appears to be an excellent and highly integrated squad weapon system. None of the SOF test team would hesitate to carry these weapons into a combat environment.

Close-up of PRC Type 81 rifle, showing integral grenade launcher, front sight assembly, gas block, gas regulator and piston.



PRC Type 74 squad machine gun, caliber 7.62x39mm, fieldstripped with cleaning kit and 100-round "music box" drum.

### TYPE 74 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** ..... 7.62x39mm.
- Operation:** ..... Gas operated with adjustable four-position regulator. Goryunov-type (SG-43) propped breech locking: After bolt reaches battery position, continued advance of the slide cams rear end of bolt in front of locking shoulder on left receiver wall. Fires from the open-bolt position.
- Cyclic rate:** ..... 750 rpm.
- Feed:** ..... Detachable 100-round spring-wound drum or 30-round staggered box-type magazine (Kalashnikov — Type 56).
- Weight, empty:** ..... 14.1 pounds.
- Length, overall:** ..... 43.6 inches.
- Barrel:** ..... Four-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.6 inches. Chrome-plated chamber and bore.
- Barrel length:** ..... 20.8 inches.
- Sights:** ..... Hooded, round front post in RPD-type housing; adjustable for windage and elevation zero. Open, square-notch rear; sliding tangent-type; adjustable for elevation from 100 to 800 meters with battle-sight setting.
- Finish:** ..... Metal surfaces salt-blued, except for phosphated bolt and slide and hard-chromed piston and gas regulator.
- Furniture:** ..... Wood, RPD-style buttstock; checkered, black plastic pistol grip panels; red, fiber-reinforced phenolic handguards.
- Accessories:** ..... Sling, spare drums and magazines, cleaning kit and spare parts.
- Status:** ..... Currently in production; in service with People's Liberation Army.
- Manufacturer:** ..... PRC government arsenals.
- Exporter:** ..... Poly Technologies, Inc., Dept. SOF, 5/F, Citic Building, 19, Jian Guo Men Wai Street, Beijing, People's Republic of China.
- T&E summary:** ..... Lightweight squad machine gun; innovative combination of combat-proven design features; cost-effective; sturdy and reliable; low perceived recoil; excellent accuracy potential and high hit probability; lacks quick-change barrel.

### Type 74 LMG

Hidden behind the bamboo curtain was another surprise for SOF's test team — the Type 74 Squad Light Machine Gun. Once

more a clever blend of combat-proven designs and indigenous adaptations, this interesting squad automatic has also been chambered for the 7.62x39mm cartridge. It



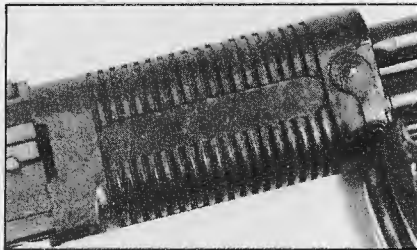


**ABOVE:** SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown fires PRC Type 81 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) with 75-round drum.

would, however, be a serious mistake to suppose that the PRC is forever committed to this caliber. Although *20 billion rounds* of 7.62x39mm remain in the Chinese inventory, *at least 50 different small arms cartridges*, ranging in caliber from 5.2mm to 6.2mm, are currently under development and experimentation. Hottest contender at this time is a unique 5.8x42mm cartridge. This latter project is classified and no additional info is presently available.

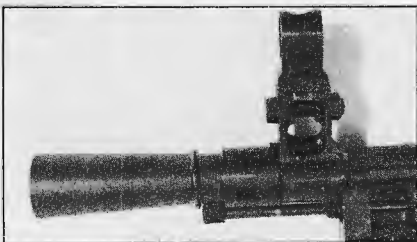
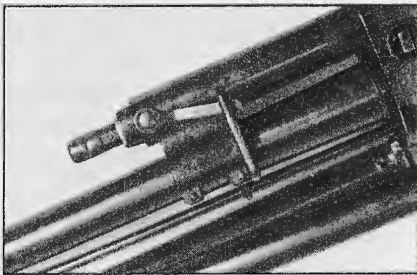
But, back to the Type 74. It weighs only

**BELOW:** Type 74 trigger mechanism. Black plastic grip panels have two finger swells. Trigger mechanism and selector have been taken from the RPD (PRC Type 56-1). There is no provision for semiautomatic fire.



**ABOVE:** Type 74's red phenolic handguards are held in place by a single pin, up front.

**BELOW:** Type 74 gas system has been taken from the PRC Type 63 rifle.



**ABOVE:** PRC Type 74 — close-up of ratchet-locked, conical flash hider, RPD-type front sight assembly and bipod.

14.1 pounds, empty. Overall length is 43.6 inches. The nine-groove barrel is 20.8 inches long and has the standard right-hand twist with one turn in 9.6 inches. Chamber and bore are, of course, chrome lined. All components, with the exception of the lightly phosphated bolt and slide and the hard-chromed piston and gas regulator, are salt blued.

There is a spring-loaded dust cover on the ejection port that flies open when the bolt group moves to the rear. The retracting handle is non-reciprocating. Both the recoil spring and its guide rod ride within the slide's piston extension. The end of the guide rod is used to retain the sheet-metal receiver cover in the Kalashnikov manner.

The gas system has been taken from the PRC Type 63 rifle (incorrectly referred to as the Type "68" by Western sources). To adjust the four-position regulator, rotate the regulator pin's spring clip from its notch on the gas block and withdraw the pin. Turn the regulator in either direction until the desired hole is aligned with the two holes in the gas cylinder. Reinsert the retaining pin and pivot its spring clip back into the locked position. The normal operating position is "2." A small, single-strand coil spring between the regulator and piston head prevents the piston from impinging directly upon the regulator's face.

The trigger mechanism is an adaptation from the RPD (PRC Type 56-1). A hook on the spring-loaded trigger enters an opening in the sear. When the trigger is pulled, the hook draws the sear downward, out of engagement with the slide's bent (notch). Rotating the safety lever (located on the right side, above the trigger guard) forward locks the sear in the upward position. There is no provision for semiautomatic fire. The cyclic rate is 750 rpm.

A ratchet-locked, conical flash hider can be removed from the muzzle by means of a spanner on the end of the combination tool included in the cleaning kit. A raised ring at the end of the flash hider holds the cleaning rod in place under the barrel.

Both the front sight assembly and the bipod are right off the RPD. Covered by a protective hood, the conventional front post is adjustable for both elevation and windage zero. A sliding, tangent-type rear sight with open square notch accommodates elevation adjustments in 100-meter increments from 100 to 800 meters along with a battle-sight setting.

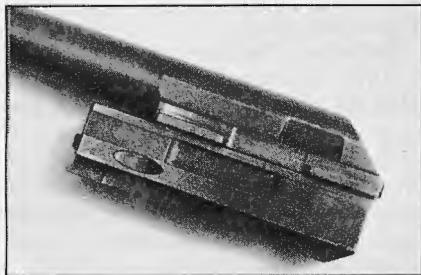
No attempt has been made to "color coordinate" the Type 74's furniture. Fabricated from reddish, fiber-reinforced, phenolic plastic, the two-piece handguards are retained by a single captive pin that is easily removed. The two-piece, checkered, black plastic pistol-grip panels have two finger grooves and are held in place by one screw. Reminiscent of the RPD, the orange-stained buttstock has a single swell for gripping with the support hand. It is attached to the receiver by a crossbolt, again in the RPD manner. Its butt trap contains a plastic box with slotted cleaning rod tip, broken case

extractor, sheet-metal reamer for the gas tube, gas port reamer, combo tool, bore brush, punch and oiler. Another compartment in the buttstock carries a spare gas regulator spring. Sling swivels have been attached to the gas block and rear of the buttstock, both on the left side.

Either standard 30-round Kalashnikov magazines or a unique 100-round drum can be inserted in the magazine-well. Dubbed the "music box" by SOF's test team, this 100-round drum makes a loud whirring sound after the last round has been fired as its mainspring unwinds, immediately notifying friend and foe alike of your predicament. Loading procedures generally duplicate those of the Type 81 75-round drum.

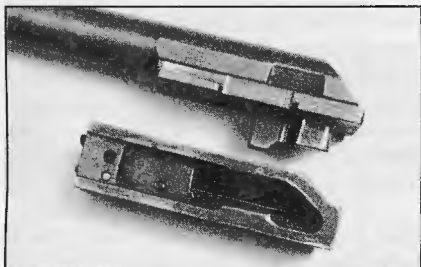
Disassembly of the Type 74 is every bit as simple as its design. After removal of the receiver cover, in the usual manner, withdraw the recoil spring and guide rod. With the safety lever in the firing mode, pull back on the charging handle and draw the slide and bolt group fully rearward. Lift them out of the receiver and separate the two components. Rotate the handguard retaining pin upward 90 degrees and pull it out to the right. Remove the handguards. Pull the gas tube away from the gas block and lift it up. Rotate the gas regulator's pin out of its notch in the gas block and pull it to the left and out of the gas block. Withdraw the gas regulator and its spring from the front end of the gas block. No further disassembly is required to service the Type 74.

Uncomplicated, but robust and reliable, the Type 74 needs only a quick-change barrel to move it up to the superlative. At 14.1



ABOVE: Type 74 bolt and slide assembled. Note wedge-shaped ejector on the bolt's left side.

BELOW: PRC Type 74 bolt and slide are based upon the method of locking utilized in the Soviet SG-43 Goryunov medium machine gun. Projection on the bottom of the slide cams the bolt in front of a locking shoulder on the left receiver wall and also serves as a hammer to strike the firing pin.



Type 74 gas system, disassembled.

## TYPE 74 METHOD OF OPERATION

The receiver on the Type 74 Squad Light Machine Gun has been fabricated as a substantial milled forging which acts as a heat reservoir to prevent "cook-offs" during sustained fire. Gas operated and firing from the open-bolt position, the system of operation is essentially that of the Russian SG-43 (Stankovaya Goryunov 1943) Medium Machine Gun (piston actuated with propped breech locking), except that it has been turned upside down.

Thus the gas system rests on top of the barrel, as the ammunition is fed from the bottom of the receiver, by magazines instead of belts. After the bolt (breech) goes into battery, the slide (attached to the piston) continues forward to cam the rear end of the bolt over in front of its locking shoulder on the left side of the receiver.

This principle was patented by John M. Browning in 1895 but never used, as

dangerous side loads are supposedly transferred to the weaker walls of the receiver. However, this theoretical consideration never seemed to affect the SG-43's endurance or reliability.

The cam projection on the bottom of the slide also serves as the hammer. After locking, the slide continues forward and this stud strikes the inertia firing pin. At the initiation of the recoil momentum, the piston and slide move rearward in free travel until the chamber pressure drops to a safe level. Then the cam projection on the slide engages the unlocking slot in the bolt, pulling the bolt away from its locking shoulder and driving the entire assembly rearward.

Ejection occurs during the recoil stroke. The ejector pin rides in a tunnel on the left side of the bolt body. When the bolt is thrust away from its locking shoulder, the ejector pin protrudes through the bolt face after its wedge-shaped end hits the locking shoulder, propelling the empty case out the ejection port on the right side of the receiver.

pounds, perceived recoil is negligible. Resting directly under the weapon's center of mass, the 100-round drum neither disturbs the handling characteristics nor interferes with firing from the prone position. If firing is kept to short bursts, the beaten zone remains quite small at all practical ranges, as the bipod's location close to the muzzle maximizes accuracy potential and hit probability at the expense of some lateral mobility. After several drums of sustained fire, the handguards were only slightly warm to the touch. When used in the assault role, the Type 74 can be fired with effective accuracy from the standing, kneeling and hip positions.

No doubt about it, the rugged Type 74 squad machine gun represents a significant

improvement over the RPK. In addition to a quick-change barrel, I can recommend only a bipod with adjustable command heights, an "unmusical" drum and possibly a slightly lower cyclic rate.

No longer the Soviet Union's clone, the People's Liberation Army has surged forward without hesitation into the rapidly moving mainstream of modern military small arms technology. Its products should find great favor with military forces seeking simple and reliable small arms that complement the current concepts of fire and movement in a cost-effective manner. Next month we'll examine a revolutionary new lightweight .50-caliber machine gun totally unknown beyond the boundaries of the Great Wall of China. ✕

# SALVADOR SITREP

## Keeping a Close Hold on FMLN Terrorists

Text & Photos by  
Dr. Robert G. Breene Jr.



Map of El Salvador, showing three zones into which country has been divided for military purposes.

### RENAISSANCE WRITER

Robert G. Breene Jr. has never had to worry much about boredom. In the last 40 years he has been a fighter pilot, a test pilot for the Air Force, an engineering consultant in the Near East, Far East and South America, a professor of physics, president of a private consulting firm doing research in applied physics, and a newspaper correspondent in Central America for the *Union Leader*. And in his spare time he owned and operated a 600-head cattle ranch in Nevada.

Dr. Breene has also found time to write about his work along the way. In addition to many scientific papers and books, he has authored articles on Nicaragua, El Salvador, Cuba and Guatemala, and two soon-to-be-published works on military history. This is his first appearance in *Soldier of Fortune*.



Morazán and the DMZ between El Salvador and Honduras.

“**C**OBRA! Cobra! Cobra!...” Sergeant Vásquez was shouting into his handset as if he were trying to raise the tracking station on Mount El Aguacate without his radio.

We were in the command post of BIAT — Anti-Terrorist Infantry Battalion — Morazán in Corinto, using a situation map to track a 40-man communist guerrilla group that had been moving through the area most of the day. The plan was to use three companies, two moving from the north, one holding to the south, to trap this gaggle of terrorists. It was now 1730 on 4 March. The guerrillas were a few kilometers southwest of Corinto, the two companies moving south. Things looked pretty good for a successful trap.

As we waited I thought about the realities of war here. First of all, the war in El Salvador is nowhere near as big a show as the Communist International — and much of the U.S. media — would like you to believe. In the States, United Press International will tell us that the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) has announced the blockade of all road traffic in El Salvador. Sounds big, doesn't it? But the truth is that two men with automatic weapons can stop the traffic on a major highway and fade back into the bush when a military patrol shows up.

Not that people aren't getting killed. They are, and the guerrillas are eager to kill more. But with the army the country now

has, these guerrillas are no more than a nuisance unless the politicians, the U.S. media and the "human rights" (*derechos humanos*) organizations, through endless hand wringing and second guessing, give away everything to the Reds.

The department of Chalatenango, lying next to Honduras and guerrilla sanctuary, has had its share of fighting during this war. And the military has "cleaned" the forested slopes of the Guazapa Volcano of Reds so often that Salvadorans call it the "asshole volcano." But the most guerrilla action takes place in the department of Morazán in the Eastern Zone (see the map on page 40). Two engagements — as major as these are now — have taken place there so far this year: The first was at Osicala on 4 January, the second at Delicias de Concepción on 13 February. Other, smaller confrontations have been fairly frequent.

The security of the department of Morazán is the responsibility of Military Detachment Number 4 (*Destacamento Militar Número 4* or DM4). The Salvadorans don't call this a regiment but, since it has four battalions, you can consider it one. Its commander is Colonel Mauricio Ernesto Vargas, who until mid-1985 was CO of the rapid-reaction Atonal Battalion. Many of the officers in DM4 have undergone training at Fort Benning and/or Fort Gulick. The people in the U.S. military who have had a part in the training of this group should be damned proud of their work. These troops aren't going to lose a war, especially *this* war, unless we take away their weapons.

DM4 is permanently headquartered at San Francisco Gotera, as is the Colonel Beltrán Luna Battalion. The Luna Battalion is specifically organized for security missions. This battalion also has responsibility for San Francisco Gotera and the surrounding territory. The rest of Morazán is divided among the three remaining battalions: Morazán, Lenca and Cacahuatique.

In early March 1987, BIAT Morazán had its command post at Corinto, BIAT Lenca

Author with Corinto commandant, Lt. Oscar Armando Peña Durán (left).



had its CP at Mount Cacahuatique, and BIAT Cacahuatique had its CP at Osicala (see map on page 40). There is a monthly rotation of the three battalions' areas of responsibility: Next month BIAT Morazán will be based at Osicala, the following month on Mount Cacahuatique.

Like all the battalions, BIAT Morazán has four companies. In early March, 2 Company was manning the CP at Corinto and the tracking station on Mount El Aguacate; its area of responsibility included the general region around those two locations. The other three Morazán companies had responsibility for the remainder of the battalion zone. Each company has four platoons of about 34 men, although *sección* rather than *pelotón* is the designation. The company zone of responsibility is divided among

Dawn breaks as patrol moves out on a routine scout to check in with detachment on Mount El Aguacate.

these four, each of which contains two *patrullas* (patrols). These patrols operate independently but often two or more of the companies cooperate on one operation.

This was the case on 4 March as we waited for the guerrilla group to walk into the trap made up of two companies concentrated to the west of Corinto and one to the southwest.

You can lay odds on a nighttime thunderstorm in Corinto in March. That night it shouldn't have been full dark by 1900 but, because of the heavy cloud cover, it was. Then one helluva storm broke, followed by others that lasted most of the night. The two companies moving south would have been halted by nightfall anyhow; this just put the lid on it. But what about the Reds? And how did we know where they were anyhow?

Intelligence on the guerrillas is gathered in two ways. The first is *métodos humanos* — intel gathered from the locals. An obvious yet very important source of information, the cooperation of the locals has increased immensely over the last three years. The other method of locating and tracking the guerrillas is the *métodos técnicos* — radio telemetry.

The map on page 40 shows locations of tracking stations on Cacahuatique and El Aguacate mountains. At each location there is a frequency scanner which picks up the guerrilla radio, and a direction finder which provides a bearing on that frequency. The method is simple but effective, providing

not only the location but also an approximate count of terrorists present. Since the Reds generally have one radio for every eight to 15 guerrillas, you simply count the radios and multiply. Not that it always works; sometimes there may be 10 radios for 10 Reds. But the method is fairly reliable and of course is substantiated whenever possible by intelligence from the locals.

When the rains came that night, all bets were off. We had to just wait and hope the trap would still work. It was impossible to know for sure what the other side was doing, or to move ourselves.

At 0500 the next morning, to the din of a thousand screeching chickens, a 15-man patrol came to attention outside the battalion CP. The commander of the battalion's 81mm mortar platoon, Lieutenant David Ramirez Nolasco, was commanding the patrol. He told them that an *americano* was coming along and to let him know whether the guy fell in a hole. The patrol mission was a routine scout to the north which was to check in with the detachment on Mount El Aguacate.

All the men of the patrol, including the CO, carried M16s. In addition, one man carried a backpack radio, while two others carried the disposable LAW rocket launcher. Radio chatter from these patrols is supposed to be kept to a minimum, and that day Lt. Ramirez used his radio only once. One of the *campesinos* we encountered thought he'd seen something, and the patrol commander checked with the CP to see if anything had come in. Nothing had.

We were lucky to climb to the top of 3,811-foot Mount El Aguacate without encountering a single "foot blower" (*quita pie*). This type of mine is made of a simple length of plastic pipe filled with a chlorate-charcoal-sugar mixture that is detonated by the breaking of a glass vial of acid when someone steps on the ground above. The day before, one of the men in the same

**A simple length of plastic pipe filled with chlorate-charcoal-sugar mixture, "foot blower" (*quita pie*) mine maims mostly women and children.**



patrol had seen a suspicious-looking spot along the roadway and dug up one of these vicious mines.

The Reds in El Salvador are following the example of their comrades in Afghanistan by concentrating on maiming non-combatants, especially children. Sure, some soldiers get their feet blown off from these mines, but most of the victims of these plastic, and hence undetectable, mines are women and children. Keep in mind that, when any admirers of the Salvadoran guerrillas start talking human rights and libera-

tion, the biggest offensive these "liberation warriors" mount is with foot blowers.

The trip-wire mines we installed around our position on Mount El Aguacate are certainly not a menace to the civilian population, but they're worth describing. About a half-pound of C-4 plastic explosive is taped to an 81mm mortar round, with a detonator inserted in the plastic. One lead is taken

**C-4 plastic explosive and detonator for 81mm mortar mine.**





Patrol rests at top of 3,811-foot Mount El Aguacate.

through a battery to a clothespin, whose closure completes the circuit back to the detonator. Trip wires are then set, leading to a block in the jaws of the pin. Block removal completes the circuit, with generally satisfactory results.

Gualococti and Mount Cacahuatique in western Morazán and Cacaopera in the central part of the department are clearly visible from Mount El Aguacate. The Honduran border is only a few kilometers to the north, that of the department of La Unión only a kilometer or so to the east. To the southeast the Gulf of Fonseca stands out, across which the Reds have been ferrying arms for these guerrillas since 1979, with communist Nicaragua looming dimly in the distance.

La Estancia is a few kilometers west-southwest of Corinto. On 2 March a patrol of 2 Company was located there from 0800 to 1800, departing for Mount La Ventana to the southwest at 1800. Probably through local informants, the guerrillas learned of the patrol's presence on that mountain and attacked from north and south at 2200, two hours after the patrol had left. For two hours the northern guerrilla detachment fired at the southern with 90mm recoilless rifles and M79 grenade launchers and lobbed gre-

nades, the southern answering in kind. The result of this guerrilla versus guerrilla battle was four dead Reds with seven more wounded.

There wasn't going to be this much action southwest of Corinto on the morning of 5 March. As we learned when we returned from patrol to Mount Aguacate, the three platoons involved in the attempt to trap the guerrillas started moving again at first light, but the guerrillas were gone, having slipped across the safety of the Honduran border. They then followed the well-traveled route through that country to the Central American DMZ, the disputed territory north of the Torola-Jocoaitique line, into which neither Salvadoran nor Honduran troops are supposed to intrude.

This brings us to a point that is at the very heart of the war in Morazán: We are giving the communist guerrillas in El Salvador a Vietnam-type sanctuary from which to attack us. Naturally, our guard-dog lawyers will start to yelp about this territory being sacrosanct, a matter of dispute before the World Court because of the 1969 war between El Salvador and Honduras. But surely these two countries could agree on operations independently. And, just as important, why does our "ally," Honduras, allow the Salvadoran guerrillas to pass freely through its territory on their way to sanctuary? I may not know all the reasons that the United States allows this to happen, but I do know one thing for sure: The people of this country just don't know what the hell is going on in Central America. ✕



ABOVE: Col. Mauricio Ernesto Vargas, commanding officer of *Destacamento Militar Número 4*, the detachment responsible for security in Morazán.

BELOW: Chopper armed with twin mounted M60s arrives at San Francisco Gotera to pick up rations and the author.



BELOW: Armed with M16s, patrol moves out just before dawn.



# THE STING THAT KILLS

## Bringing Ivan's Air War Down to Earth

Text & Photos by Almerigo Grilz

"With effective missiles we could make the Soviets pay dearly..."  
— Professor Syed Burhanuddin Rabbani, leader of the *Jamiat-i-Islami* (Islamic Society) party.

LATE at night on 12 November 1986, a coordinated attack was launched against the heavily defended Khugiani district, southwest of Jalalabad. Mujahideen forces under the command of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's faction of *Hezb-i-Islami*, Yunis Khalis' faction of *Hezb-i-Islami* and Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani's National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA) jointly participated. Although 19 mujahideen were killed and 30 wounded during the assault, the district headquarters was overrun and the remaining Afghan government forces were encircled on a bare hilltop.

As usual, Soviet Mi-24 helicopter gunships were quickly sent in to strafe the rebels and relieve the garrison. But this time it wasn't mujahideen fish in a barrel for the Mi-24 gunners. The rebels hit back, *hard*, with a new weapon — U.S.-made Stinger antiaircraft missiles. The result? Two "flying tanks" shot down.

This attack on Khugiani was not the first time the mujahideen had used their new Stinger missiles, but it was the first time since the 1979 Soviet invasion that the freedom fighters were able to control airspace over a battlefield and prevent Soviet aircraft from attacking at will.

This message wasn't lost on the Afghan army, either. I saw helicopters over Khugiani shortly before the second one was shot down; they were flying very low. This makes them safer from Stingers but brings them within range of the other weapons. And follow-up efforts to relieve the surrounded communist troops with air support never materialized. The besieged enemy ground forces were left to face the Afghans on their own.

Courage, fanatical devotion and hand-reloaded rounds for antiquated Enfield rifles

### REQUIESCAT IN PACE

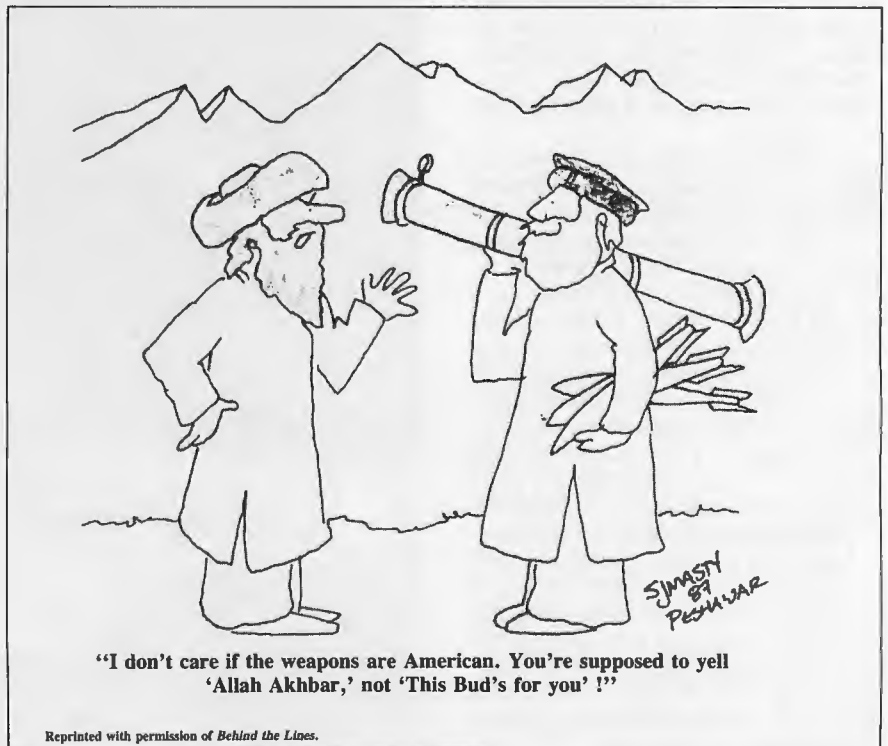
Almerigo Grilz, reporter for the Italian Albatross Press Agency and known internationally for his coverage of conflicts in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola, Lebanon and Burma, was killed during a firefight in Mozambique this past June 1987.

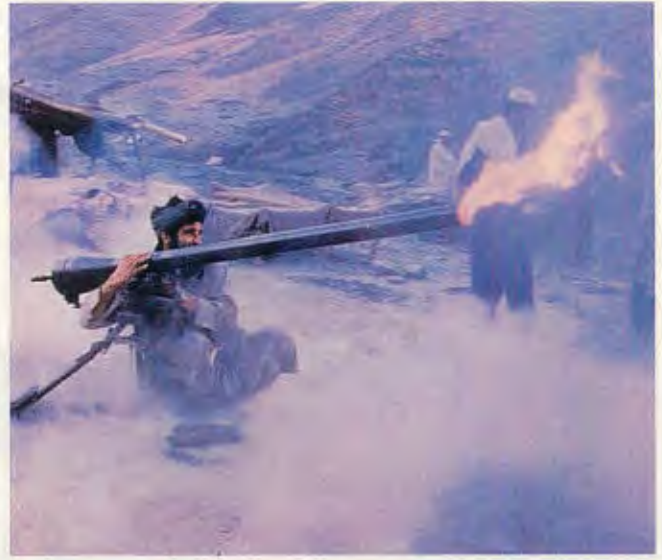
*Soldier of Fortune Magazine* is honored to have run two previous articles by Almerigo: his first, "Angolan Assault," appeared in the May '86 issue, and "New People's Army" appeared in the January '87 issue.

Our editorial staff wishes to pass on our condolences to Almerigo's friends, family and co-workers.

were never much of a threat to armored Soviet Mi-24 Hind-D helicopter gunships or high-speed MiG-21s or Sukhoi SU-25 fighters. But that all changed last year with the arrival of 150 shoulder-fired Stinger antiaircraft weapons from the United States. The Stinger is the first weapon used by the mujahideen that has all the characteristics required by a mobile guerrilla force pitted against a modern army. Lightweight, man-portable and powerful, the Stinger is a fire-and-forget missile that can engage aircraft from any angle.

In the past, mujahideen air defenses consisted of whatever weaponry was available, and such weapons were usually unsuitable for downing modern aircraft. Most common was the now obsolete Soviet-designed 12.7mm DShK heavy machine gun (known as "Dashika" to the mujahideen). But the





**ABOVE AND ABOVE RIGHT:** Mujahideen of Gailani's NIFA (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan) with 75mm recoilless rifle at Shelman base in Nangarhar Province.

speed of Soviet jet fighters and the titanium armor of the Mi-24 helicopter gunships made kills with the Dashika extremely difficult. Later, the rebels acquired Chinese-made ZPU-1 and ZPU-2 14.5mm heavy machine guns, which they call "Ziqriats." While more effective than the Dashikas, the Ziqriats are extremely heavy, which limits their use to mountaintop positions or static defense of strongholds.



Nine Swiss-made Oerlikon 20mm anti-aircraft guns were then introduced experimentally in Kunar Province. They proved effective, with seven helicopters reportedly shot down. Though lighter than the 68.6-kilo Ziqriats, the 61-kilo Oerlikons tend to overheat quickly and still lack the mobility needed by the mujahideen. A

*Continued on page 95*

**LEFT:** Soviet hand grenade with plastic detonator captured by the mujahideen of *Hezb-i-Islami* in Ciapryha region, near Jalalabad.

## STINGER STATS

Stinger anti-aircraft missiles are proving to be worth their weight in gold in places like Afghanistan and Angola. Richard Weintraub of the *Washington Post* reported in January 1987 that Afghan mujahideen had already downed "90 to 100 Soviet or Afghan government aircraft" with the new missile. In February, David Ottaway, also of the *Post*, reported that after training sessions of six to eight weeks, the rebels "were averaging seven to eight hits for every 10 Stingers fired in combat." Ottaway also stated that Jonas Savimbi's troops in Angola are scoring similar successes. Finally, in the 10 February edition of the *Post*, Gary Lee wrote that Western diplomats in Moscow were estimating a loss of Soviet aircraft at "the rate of one a day after the Stingers were introduced into the rebels' arsenals."

Though often maligned by Pentagon-bashing critics for being too complicated for the intended users, the Stinger is getting rave reviews from the battlefield. Developed by the United States Missile Command in conjunction with General Dynamics to replace the Redeye, Stingers are man-portable, shoulder-fired guided missile systems which enable a

soldier to engage low-altitude jet and propeller-driven aircraft as well as helicopters.

The Redeye's greatest tactical drawback is that it is solely a "revenge" weapon — it only chases departing aircraft. The Stinger's superior maneuverability and passive infrared guidance system allow it to engage aircraft at any angle. It also has an impressive effective range of 5 kilometers (3 miles). Essentially a "fire and forget" weapon, the Stinger is currently the basic man-portable SAM (surface-to-air missile) in U.S. Army and Marine service.

The missile itself contains a high explosive, hit-to-kill warhead, an electric control system and a dual-thrust rocket motor. To avoid any backblast which might compromise the user's position, a separable eject motor launches the Stinger to a safe distance from the gunner before the rocket-motor ignites.

This entire anti-aircraft weapon system (including disposable launch tube and reusable grip-stock) can be carried and fired by one soldier. The grip-stock contains the launch electronics and IFF (Identification, Friend or Foe) antenna and is used for multiple firings, while the launch tube is discarded after one use. The system requires no field testing or

direct support maintenance.

To engage a target, after making visual contact the gunner finds it in the optical sight, initiates the missile functions, performs IFF interrogation, and launches the missile against the hostile aircraft. On launch, the missile guides itself automatically to the target.

### Data

- Type:** . . . . . man-portable, shoulder-fired surface-to-air guided missile.
- Guidance:** . . . . . optical aiming, infrared homing.
- Propulsion:** . . . . . solid propellant dual-thrust rocket motor with separable boost motor.
- Warhead:** . . . . . high explosive.
- Length:** . . . . . 1,524 mm (approx. 61 inches).
- Weight:** . . . . . 13.4 kg (approx. 30 pounds).
- Diameter:** . . . . . 70 mm (approx. 3 inches).
- Speed:** . . . . . supersonic.
- Crew:** . . . . . normally a team of two, each equipped to fire independently.
- Manufacturer:** . General Dynamics.

— The Editors



# Firing the SA80

## The British Army's new combat rifle

by *Combat and Survival Staff*

**The British Army's ultra-modern new rifle, the SA80, is arguably the best service rifle now available. The SA80's revolutionary features give the individual infantryman an unprecedented degree of deadly accurate firepower in a weapon that's incredibly tough, simple to maintain, and a pleasure to handle.**

The most striking feature of the SA80 is its 'bull-pup' configuration. The whole length of the gun consists of working parts, with a padded shoulder rest at the rear end.

The magazine sits behind the trigger so that a long barrel can be fitted into a short overall length. The SA80's barrel is only a little shorter than the SLR L1A1 rifle it replaces, but is 30 per cent shorter. As a result, the weapon is extremely easy to handle, especially in confined spaces, while the magazine, sitting close in to the body, can be changed with a lot less effort than on a conventional weapon.

**The introduction of the SA80 will dramatically improve the firepower of British infantry. Far more accurate than the old Self-Loading Rifle and with the capacity for fully automatic fire, the SA80 is a match for any service rifle in the world.**

### **House to house fighter**

All these are important advantages for the British soldier: charging through a doorway in Belfast with the long SLR was never easy, whereas the SA80's stubbiness makes it ideal for house-to-house fighting. And carrying the weapon is no problem at all.

The SA80's sling arrangement has delighted the men who have to live with the weapon. The rifle can be hung across the chest, back, or down one side, leaving the hands free. Hefting the SLR with one hand in a 'non-threatening posture' while on street patrol in Northern Ireland was tedious and tiring – and is now a thing of the past. The SA80's sling also means that the weapon doesn't get in the way when hacking through jungle, snow, or forest, but it still comes swiftly into action, simply by unclipping the sling at the top. The sling then stays put on the shoulder, out of the way.

**British infantry are receiving the SA80 with an optical sight, the SUSAT, which provides  $\times 4$  magnification. This is a tremendous aid to accuracy, especially when shooting in poor light conditions.**



**British troops will be issued with a magazine produced by Royal Ordnance, but the SA80 is capable of using the same magazine as the American M16.**



**Above: The SA80 enables an average soldier to shoot to a very high standard, thanks to its sight, low recoil and simplicity of operation.**



**The SA80 fires the new NATO 5.56-mm round, and it is planned that each soldier will have eight 30-round magazines plus a bandolier of ammo to re-charge them in the field.**

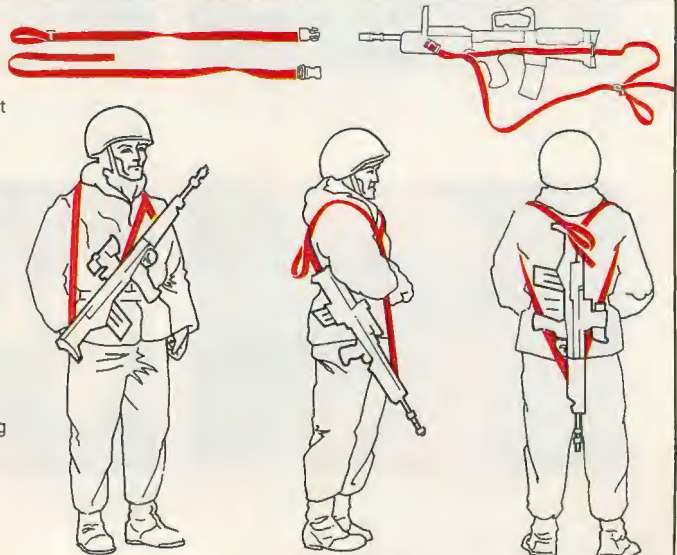


**With the SA80, your shoulder receives nothing like the kick delivered by the SLR. This improves accuracy, since soldiers firing the SLR tended to tense up while awaiting the recoil, which made for an unsteady firing position.**

## The Sling

The SA80's sling allows the weapon to be secured to your body, leaving both hands free. It consists of two lengths of webbing: a longer piece with a female clip and a flat plastic loop attached, and a shorter piece with the male part of the clip at one end and a quick-release buckle and loop at the other end.

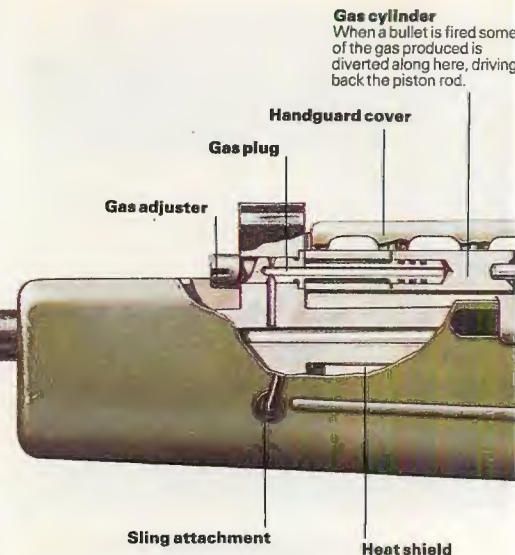
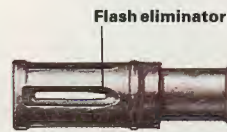
To position the SA80 across the chest, separate the two straps and slip the loop over your head, right arm and shoulder. The weapon will be suspended across your left shoulder and its position adjusted by pulling on the clear end of the longer strap. Tugging the quick release loop or releasing the clip will allow the weapon to be aimed.



**One feature of the SA80 which has gone down very well with British troops is the sling. This allows you to have both hands free, with the weapon secured in several different positions.**

# Inside the SA80

Firing the new NATO 5.56-mm cartridge, the SA80 produces so little recoil that you can keep the target in your sights all the time. This is a great improvement over the SLR, which tends to veer off target with each round. It is exceptionally accurate at battlefield ranges and is capable of fully automatic fire.



**Gas cylinder**  
When a bullet is fired some of the gas produced is diverted along here, driving back the piston rod.

## Field stripping and maintenance

After firing 200 rounds, the SA80 should be stripped down and cleaned so that it will continue to function properly. Before commencing the field strip you must perform basic safety precautions: (1) release the safety catch; (2) set the change lever to 'R'; (3) cock the weapon, look inside and check that the chamber is clear; (4) let the working parts go forward, reapply safety catch and leave the dust cover open.



**1** Take out the locking pins; first the rear one, then the front one. Once the rear pin is fully out it should be pushed in about 5mm so that its base is not showing. This stops the recoil spring assembly flying out when you remove the TMH (Trigger Mechanism Housing).



**2** Keeping the body of the weapon upside down and horizontal, remove the TMH by extracting the front locking pin and pulling the TMH from the body, butt first.



**3** Fully withdraw the rear locking pin and remove the recoil spring assembly, but do not separate the spring from the assembly.



**4** Pull the cocking handle to the rear to unlock the bolt, raise the muzzle slightly and slide out the cocking handle and carrier.



**5** Strip down the carrier and bolt: remove the firing-pin retaining pin from the carrier. This is very small, and in the field should be placed in a beret to stop it getting lost. Remove the firing pin.



**6** Remove the bolt from the bolt carrier and place this with the firing pin and its retaining pin in your beret.

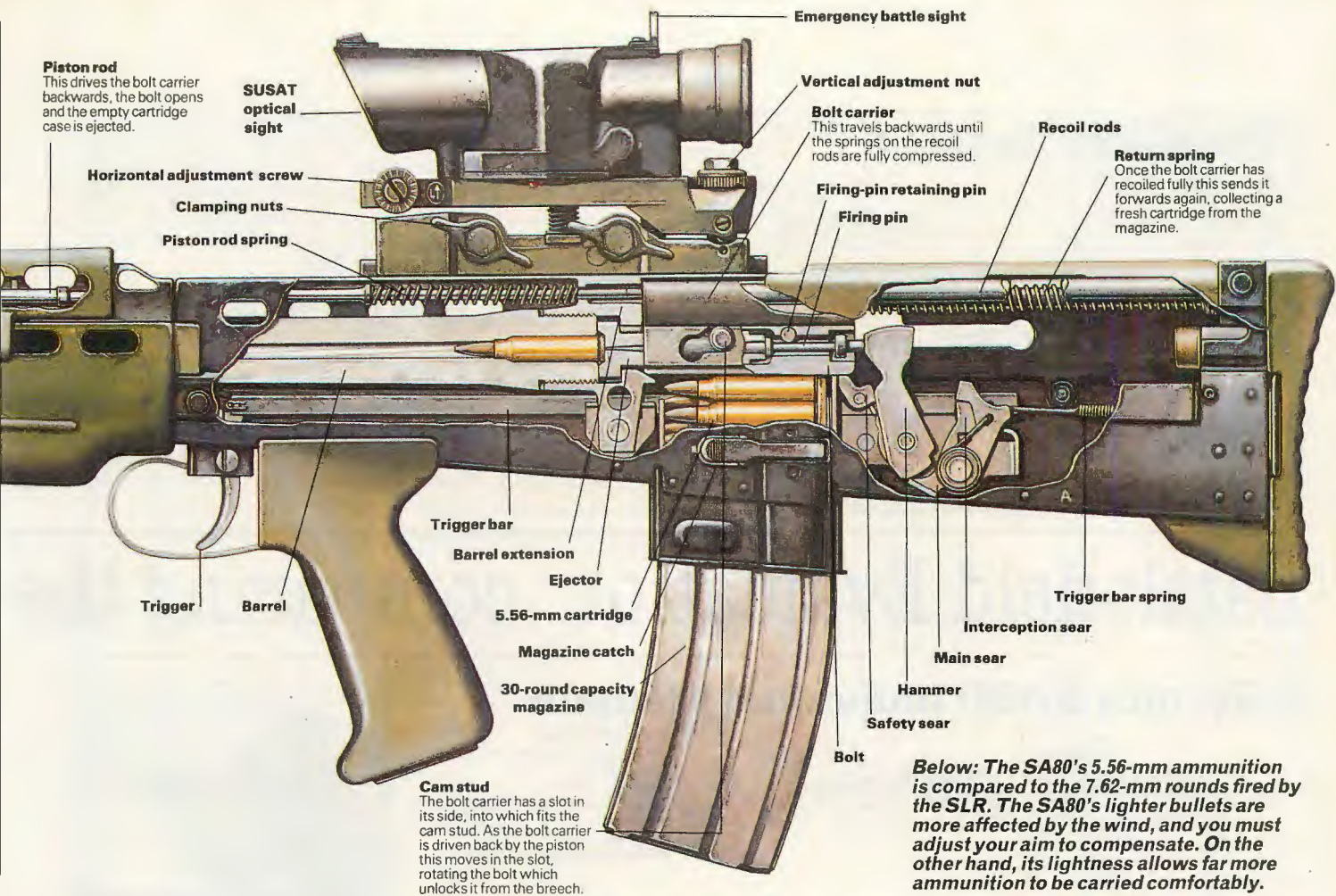
Because of its 'bullpup' design the SA80's empty cases are ejected from a port right opposite the firer's face, so it can only be fired right-handed. But in extensive tests with the new weapon left-handed soldiers have had little difficulty in adjusting to right-handed shooting.

### Taking out the target

The SA80 is the first combat weapon to be issued to front-line troops with a telescopic sight as a standard fitting. The sight, known as SUSAT (Sight Unit, Small Arms, Trilux) gives a 4× magnification and comes fitted with a comfortable rubber eyepiece. Through this the shooter sees a pointer – dark in daylight, illuminated with the radioactive Trilux lamp in poor light – that he places against the target. The SUSAT sight gives the British infantryman a massive advantage over a conventionally-equipped enemy and lets him unleash a hail of accurate fire even in the worst combat conditions.

A selector lever set at R (for 'repetition') lets you fire the SA80 a shot at a time, while set at A ('automatic') the rifle will fire for as long as the trigger is pressed and there are rounds in the magazine. Which you use depends largely on the tactical circumstances but, unlike some, the British Army has a long tradition of marksmanship and economy of fire. Automatic fire will be reserved for the last stages of an assault or for house-to-house fighting.

Out of the SA80's business end comes a 5.56-mm round that's light enough for each man to carry a standard ration of eight 30-round magazines plus a bandolier of ammo. Light



**Below:** The SA80's 5.56-mm ammunition is compared to the 7.62-mm rounds fired by the SLR. The SA80's lighter bullets are more affected by the wind, and you must adjust your aim to compensate. On the other hand, its lightness allows far more ammunition to be carried comfortably.

as it is, the round is still thoroughly effective at up to 600 metres – although in practice small-arms fire is rarely called for at ranges over 300 metres.

Currently, the SA80 is issued with magazines made for the US Army's M16. Although theoretically compatible these magazines are in fact ill-made and a constant cause of stoppage. Fortunately a custom-made magazine is on its way, though that may be little comfort to those who come under fire in the meantime.

The new ammo gives very little recoil, so the SA80 can be held on target



**7** To strip the gas parts at the front of the SA80, lift the cover and pull the piston back so that the spring is depressed, and pull off the gas cylinder.



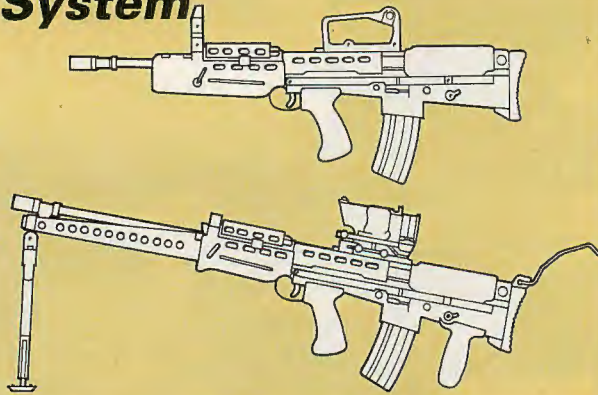
**8** Pull out the piston and its spring. The spring stays on the piston, and should not be removed. Take out the gas plug by depressing and pushing it through its housing.



**9** Carbon fouling is cleaned off the bolt with a nylon pad. With a little oil this will also remove rust but, like a pan scourer, should not be used on weapon parts coated with a protective finish.

## The SA80 System

A heavy-barrelled version of the SA80 called the Light Support Weapon will replace the General Purpose Machine Gun within British infantry sections. Capable of delivering very accurate short bursts of fire out to 600 m, it is practically identical to the SA80, so soldiers only have to learn one system. Illustrated top right is an SA80 with iron sights; this will be issued to heavy weapons crew and rear echelon personnel instead of their Sterling SMGs.



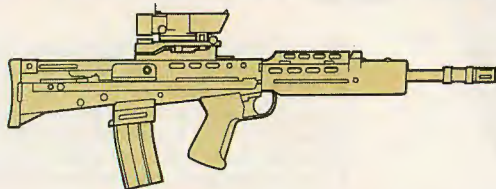
for continuous firing – whereas most assault rifles tend to jump off target with every shot and thump heavily into the shooter's shoulder. Wind does easily affect the flight of the bullet, however, so your aim has to compensate for this.

### Three into one

The SA80 replaces three weapons in the infantry armoury: the SLR, the 9-mm Sterling submachine gun, and the 7.62-mm General Purpose Machine Gun. To take the GPMG's place there will be a version with a heavy barrel and bipod. Known as the Light Support Weapon, it is virtually

# Battlefield Evaluation: comparing the

## 5.56-mm SA80 Individual Weapon



A complete weapons system replacing the British Army's rifles, LMGs and SMGs, the SA80 is arguably the finest service rifle available today. Short and handy, it is ideal both for urban combat and for the cramped interior of an APC. Its SUSAT sight is a great aid to accuracy and is especially valuable when shooting in poor light conditions.

### Specification:

**Cartridge:** 5.56-mm NATO  
**Weight:** 5 kg  
**Length:** 785 mm  
**Cyclic rate of fire:** 800 rounds per minute  
**Magazine:** 30-round box  
**Effective range:** 500 m

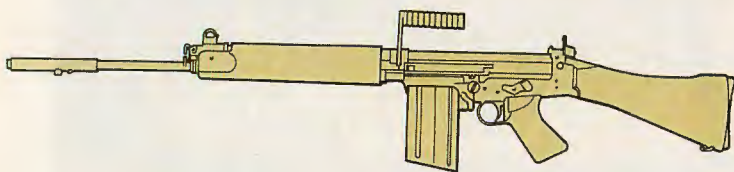
### Assessment

**Reliability:** \*\*\*\*\*  
**Accuracy:** \*\*\*\*\*  
**Age:** \*  
**Worldwide users:** \*



*The SA80 has proved itself a remarkably tough rifle in an extensive testing programme.*

## 7.62-mm L1A1 Self-Loading Rifle



The British Army is one of about 50 armies to use a version of the Belgian FN FAL. In service for nearly 30 years, it has been obsolete for some time and many regiments have found teaching marksmanship with worn-out weapons to be an impossible task. Its 7.62-mm ammunition is unnecessarily powerful for the modern battlefield.

### Specification

**Cartridge:** 7.62 mm x51 NATO  
**Weight:** 5 kg  
**Length:** 1143 mm  
**Rate of fire:** (single shot) 40 rounds per minute  
**Magazine:** 20-round box  
**Effective range:** 500 m

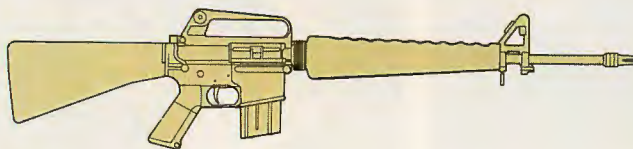
### Assessment

**Reliability:** \*\*\*  
**Accuracy:** \*\*  
**Age:** \*\*\*\*\*  
**Worldwide users:** \*\*\*\*\*



*Seen here in Northern Ireland, the SLR has been used all over the world by British soldiers.*

## 5.56-mm AR-15 (M16) Rifle



The M16 started the fashion for 5.56-mm ammunition and the latest model, the M16A2, is a substantial improvement over the original version used by US troops in Vietnam. Stronger and with better sights, full automatic fire has been replaced by a three-round burst option which gives three shots at a high rate for one pull of the trigger.

### Specification: (M16A2)

**Cartridge:** 5.56 mm NATO  
**Weight:** 4 kg  
**Length:** 1000 mm  
**Cyclic rate of fire:** 600 rounds per minute  
**Magazine:** 20- or 30-round box  
**Effective range:** 500 m

### Assessment

**Reliability:** \*\*\*\*\*  
**Accuracy:** \*\*\*  
**Age:** \*\*\*\*\*  
**Worldwide users:** \*\*\*\*



*The M16 has proved itself a good rifle after an uncertain beginning in Vietnam.*

identical to the SA80, so soldiers will now need to be familiar with only one weapon instead of three, while the ammunition is interchangeable with all NATO small arms chambered for the new 5.56-mm cartridge. With his new rifle in his hands the British infantryman can easily outshoot any potential opponent.



*Right: A soldier dives to the ground after running 100 yards to deliver 10 aimed shots at a target 200 yards away. British troops have found the SA80 to be tough, accurate and reliable.*

# SA80 with its rivals.

## 7.62-mm Kalashnikov AKM Rifle



The modernised version of the original AK-47, the AKM is now being replaced in Warsaw Pact service but vast numbers remain operational all over the world. Very simple and easy to operate, the AKM is ideal for third-world guerrillas. Its only real disadvantage is the change lever, which makes a resounding click and is tricky to move while wearing Arctic mittens.

**Specification**  
**Cartridge:** 7.62 mm x39  
**Weight:** 3.15 kg  
**Length:** 876 mm  
**Cyclic rate of fire:** 600 rounds per minute  
**Magazine:** 30-round box  
**Effective range:** 400 m

**Assessment:**  
**Reliability** \*\*\*\*  
**Accuracy** \*\*\*  
**Age** \*\*\*\*\*  
**Worldwide users** \*\*\*\*\*



*The AK series of assault rifles are brutally simple pieces of kit, and very reliable.*

## IMI Galil Assault Rifle



Israel's first home-produced rifle, the Galil is produced in two models: one firing full-power 7.62-mm NATO ammunition, and one firing 5.56-mm. Closely based on the AK series, the Galil has one feature that shows good appreciation of soldiers' use of firearms; it has a built-in bottle opener.

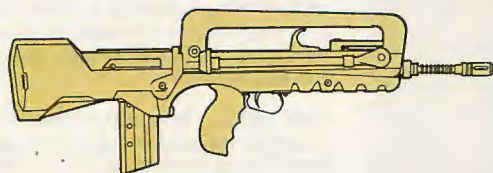
**Specification:** (7.62-mm assault rifle)  
**Cartridge:** 7.62-mm NATO  
**Weight:** 4.9 kg  
**Length:** 1050 mm  
**Rate of fire:** 600 rounds per minute  
**Magazine:** 25-round box  
**Effective range:** 500 m

**Assessment**  
**Reliability** \*\*\*\*  
**Accuracy** \*\*\*\*  
**Age** \*\*  
**Worldwide users** \*\*



*The Israelis value rugged simplicity too, and the Galil follows the AK tradition.*

## 5.56-mm FA MAS Rifle



A bullpup design like the SA80, the French FA MAS can be set to eject spent cases to each side, although this is a fiddly job. Its phenomenal rate of fire will empty a 25-round magazine in 1 1/2 seconds, and it takes practice to control.

**Specification:**  
**Cartridge:** 5.56-mm x45  
**Weight:** 4.5 kg  
**Length:** 757 mm  
**Cyclic rate of fire:** 900-1000 rounds per minute  
**Magazine:** 25-round box  
**Effective range:** 400 m

**Assessment**  
**Reliability** \*\*\*  
**Accuracy** \*\*\*  
**Age** \*  
**Worldwide users** \*



*The FA MAS is the only other 'bullpup' rifle to have been adopted apart from the SA80.*

# DAWN ASSAULT IN DHOFAR

## British Officer Corners Omani Rebels

Text & Photos by Major C. E. Parks

IT was a wet dull day in 1980 when the officer from the Ministry of Defence called. It was raining again in Northern Ireland, the car wouldn't start and it was the beginning of the marching season. I suppose my caller couldn't have known all that, but I have always had a suspicion that he did. The men from the ministry like to have you at a disadvantage.

The proposition he made offered a way out of the damp of Ulster. Moreover it was a job that no adventurous young officer could turn down. He was asking if I wanted to go back to Oman and command an artillery battery in the Sultan of Oman's army. I had served a brief emergency tour in Dhofar, the southern province of Oman, eight years earlier, when the war with the communist rebels was at its height. After returning I had volunteered for Loan Service with the Omani army. The application had been gathering dust at Whitehall for nearly seven years.

By 1980 the number of British officers on loan to the Sultan was winding down. There were now only two battery commanders left in the artillery, and they were due to leave shortly and be replaced by Omani officers.

Fortunately for me, the Sultan had acquired 12 Soviet M46 130mm guns from the Egyptians. These guns were effectively brand-new, having been standing in an ordnance park ever since the Egyptians expelled the Soviets. There was plenty of ammunition, and the deal even included the Kraz lorries to pull the guns.

The only problem from the Omanis' point of view was that they did not have enough field grade officers to provide two new battery commanders. The resultant request for two new Loan Service Officers had eventually led to my phone call.

It took me about thirty seconds to make up my mind, and then even less to remember that I was no longer footloose and fancy-free, but newly married, with our first child on the way. I suppose the longing must have shown when I talked it over with my wife that evening, because she agreed that I must go, despite the fact that it was an unaccompanied tour.

So it was that I found myself commuting weekly from our home in Ulster to the Army School of Languages at Beaconsfield and struggling with the mysteries of Arabic. Since my earlier visit, Omanisation had become the buzz word and English was rapidly being phased out.

**TOP:** A Soviet 130mm M46 gun in full recoil during a training mission. This gun, with its 27-kilometer range, is a useful backup to the lighter 105mm guns of the Sultan's artillery.

**FAR LEFT:** Three of the weapons captured following the cordon and search operation. From left to right: Czech Vz58, SKS and AK-47 of Chinese origin.

**LEFT:** The cap badge of the Sultan of Oman's Artillery and the arm badge of 1st Regiment SOA, to which the author's battery was attached.



## ARTILLERIST & AUTHOR

Major C.E. Parks, a former officer of the Royal Horse Artillery, twice served in Oman, first during the communist insurgency and later on secondment from the British Army. Other assignments included a tour with the British Army on the Rhine and extensive duty in Northern Ireland. Now retired, he has turned his attention to writing. "Dawn Assault in Dhofar" is Parks' first contribution to *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*.

The author and his command group about to set out on another operation.



Arabic is not an easy language. I found it very difficult to make much headway, so it was with great relief that I found I had passed the end-of-course exam. After two weeks' leave I flew out to Oman.

Nine months later I was colder than I had ever been in Ulster. It gets very cold in the hours just before dawn, even on the moderate side of the Dhofar Jebels, the mountain range that separates coastal Dhofar from the interior. With the grass still lush after the end of the monsoon, the chill soon starts to bite through to the bone. Through the binoculars I could just make out the low, round shapes of the wicker, grass and cloth huts of the Jebali (the indigenous population of the Jebels) village below me.

Just behind me a stone clicked and I turned my head to snarl at the culprit. All I could see was the gleam of teeth. Arif (Corporal) Haji Nabi Bux held out the thermos cup with a grin. "Chai seedi, chai haar," he hissed. For hot tea I was prepared to forgive him. No other sound could be heard from the small headquarters group spread out around me, and I relaxed as I sipped slowly

**BELOW:** Strategic Oman is Britain's closest ally in the Gulf, which led to Britain's role in Oman's war against Marxist rebels.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Eastern Dhofar province, scene of Parks' fight with PFLOAG rebels.

at the scalding *chai hamra*, the red tea of the Arabs.

The night before, I had been enjoying the unaccustomed luxury of a bed in an air-conditioned room in the artillery barracks at Sahalnawat near Salalah in southern Oman. I had just brought my battery back to camp after a three-week exercise exploring the edge of the Rub al Khali, the Empty Quarter. We were the only battery in barracks — two of the three light batteries with which we shared the camp were deployed on the Yemeni border and one was on block leave.

The orderly NCO hammering on my door was about as welcome as a scorpion in my boot. The Colonel Sahib wanted to see me. It was two in the morning as I pulled on my uniform and walked down to regimental headquarters. The lights were blazing and it was full of bustle. Rather unusual in 1982, after six years of peace. The CO was in the ops room poring over a map.

Muqaddam Jumma Salim was the first Omani to achieve the rank of colonel in the Sultan's artillery. His cheerful air and charming personality belied his professionalism. A very experienced officer, he ruled his regiment with a fist of iron, and his soldiers loved him for it. I was glad that my battery had fallen under the administrative control of his unit, but sometimes equally glad that it was also an operationally inde-

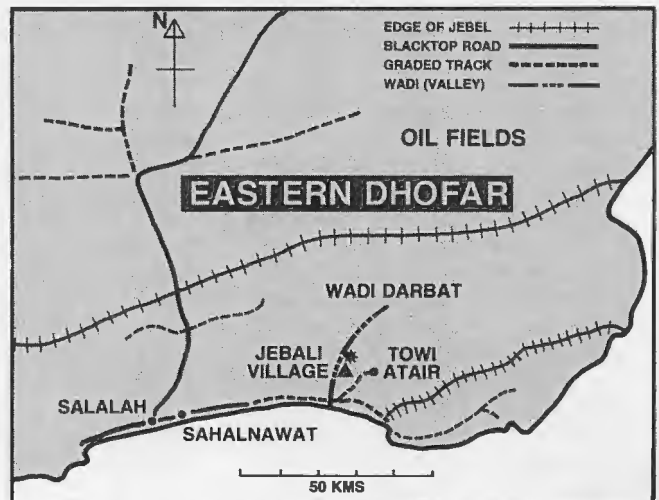
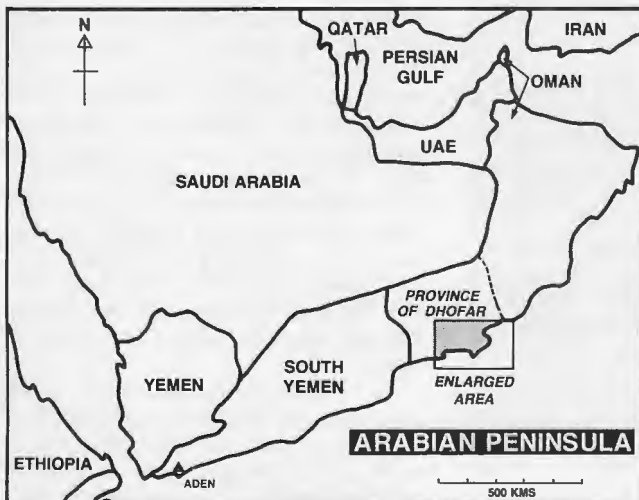
pendent command.

In the staff car as we drove to the South Oman Brigade HQ at Umm al Guarif, we speculated about the cause of the panic. The colonel had been told only that he was to provide a battery to deploy as infantry into the Jebel near Towi Atair, the Well of Birds. Even now my officers and sergeants major were rousing the soldiers, and the battery quartermaster sergeant was drawing our operational small arms ammunition.

The brigade intelligence officer (IO) was waiting for us in the briefing room. He seemed rather surprised to find that there were still British Loan Service Officers commanding batteries in the Sultan's army. There weren't many of us, but you'd have thought an IO should have known.

The problem appeared simple. Two civilians driving on one of the Jebel's dirt roads had been flagged down by three armed men. The civilians had recognized the weapons as AK-47s. Knowing possession of these to be illegal, and hoping for a reward, they had told their story to the police.

From a series of photographs they had identified their passengers as three of the last remaining PFLOAG (Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf) rebels at large in Dhofar. It seemed likely from their conversation that they were on their way to visit one of their family







**A jubilant Nageeb (Captain) Said Mubarrick Said, an officer of the author's battery. The full weight of the Dhofar war fell on Omani officers like him and, as a result, many of them are highly professional and able soldiers.**

## “ARAB VICTORY OVER COMMUNISM”

On 17 December 1975 the following motion was passed in the British House of Commons:

“Arab Victory Over Communism”

“That this House is greatly encouraged by the successful conclusion to the 10-year war in Oman, congratulates the Sultan's troops on achieving one of the very few victories over communist-inspired rebels since the Second World War, records with pride the contribution made by hundreds of present and former members of the British armed forces, and pays special tribute to the work of the Special Air Service.”

This brief parliamentary mention of the Dhofar war attracted little attention from anyone, indeed the war had attracted very little itself, so perhaps it was natural that its end should be so quiet.

In Oman the end of the war meant that the Sultan could continue the work of bringing his country into the 20th century and complete the eradication of the causes of the Dhofar war. It is significant that, on 4 December 1975, when Brigadier John Akehurst, the commander of the Dhofar Brigade, signalled the Sultan that the war was over, he referred to work necessary in the future, stating, “I have the honour to inform your Majesty that Dhofar is now secure for civil development.”

Of course it wasn't quite as easy as that. What was left of the Patriotic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG, formerly the Patriotic Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf) had quietly dropped the Arabian Gulf from their stated aims and become simply the PFLO.

After 1975 there were no rebel-controlled areas left in Dhofar, although there were still places where wise men slept lightly, with their rifles at hand.

Some 75 hard-core terrorists remained at large, but the majority of the cadres slipped away to join the Firquats, counterinsurgency units raised by the SAS from the ranks of rebel defectors. The financial inducements to defect were rather attractive. The Sultan paid generously for surrendered weapons — up to \$3000 for a 122mm rocket launcher and \$275 for a rifle.

This policy was wisely continued after the formal end of the war. In this way the risk of further risings was reduced as the arms caches of the Jebel were turned into hard cash. In the two-year period up to August 1976, some one-and-a-half million dollars was paid out in this way, half of it in the last six months of the period.

Over the last few years the remaining rebels have been whittled away, and at the time of this writing probably none remain in Dhofar's hills. Many of the central cadres retreated to the Marxist-run People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. Those who remained were continually on the run. They were only able to carry out a few insignificant operations. These included the murder of a European on the beach near Salalah in 1980 and a number of arms thefts and minor sabotage attacks. Good intelligence work and increasing disaffection among the Jebalis eventually led to their elimination by the army.

In 1982 an accord was signed between Oman and Yemen, and the last remaining Omani refugees in Yemen were persuaded to return to Oman and take up the Sultan's offer of amnesty. Their return over the border below the once hotly disputed escarpment of Sarfait was a tense and worrying time for both sides. That it was successfully accomplished without incident says much for the good will of the Sultan's soldiers.

The last remaining rebels are now once again raising their cattle on the Jebel. However, they are still carefully watched over by the SAS-trained Firquat.

villages. I felt that they must be getting very tired of life on the run to become so careless.

The IO's files had pinpointed the family, and careful inquiries among the Firquat (irregular counterinsurgency unit, originally raised by the SAS using PFLOAG defectors) had produced their probable location at this time of year. There was no infantry available, so my task was simple: go and bring them in.

Armed with a collection of aerial photos of the valley in question, and the promise of helicopters if they were needed, Jumma and I drove back to Sahalnawat to thrash out a plan. As we drove I thanked my lucky stars that I had spent so much training time beating infantry tactics into my battery, to the amusement of the rest of the gunners!

It would have been overkill, not to mention an impossible command problem, to have taken all 140 of my soldiers, some of whom were only just out of recruit training, into the hills in pursuit of three renegades. Two troops, nominally of 30 men but actually more like 20, plus my command group should be more than sufficient to run down three rather tired terrorists. As it turned out it was, but only just!

I decided against a heliborne operation, feeling that even a few moments of initial confusion would be enough to allow the *adoo* (enemy) to lose their weapons and mingle with the innocent Jebalis. In order to get fairly close to the village without spooking the quarry, we would deploy from barracks with our guns and conduct a dry fire and movement exercise down the coast past the Towi Atair road.

After last light the two troops and I would break away and conduct a swift forced march in order to have the village surrounded by first light. Nageeb (Captain) Said Mubarrick Said's troop would stand by in the choppers from after first light as a mobile reaction force. The remainder of the battery, under Nageeb Said Mubarrick Eid, would bring two guns into action to provide cover for the operation. We had practiced this sort of thing many times in the nine months since the battery had been raised.

None of the problems I had anticipated occurred and we were able to complete the move on time. Even finding the village proved easier than expected, and the new 1:100,000 maps proved accurate. The cordon troop commanded by Mulaazim (2nd Lieutenant) Mahmoud Saif was in position, and the search troop with the battery sergeant major and myself was ready to move.

As I sipped my tea and waited for the light, there was only one real problem worrying me. Oman was now officially at peace, and therefore armed men must be challenged and given the opportunity to sur-

render. This policy works quite well in the staff officer's office, but less well in the field. My experience with the *adoo* led me to believe that they would probably give me cause to regret the new procedure.

At daybreak the village started to awaken. Soon, sharp eyes below would detect some sign of our presence. It was time to go. Stretching my cramped legs, I motioned to Haji for the radio handset and ordered, "*Taharrak dal heen*" — move now.

As we moved down the side of the valley toward the village, an old woman looked up and saw us. Alarm quickly spread through the small group of huts. Not three but seven armed men burst into sight.

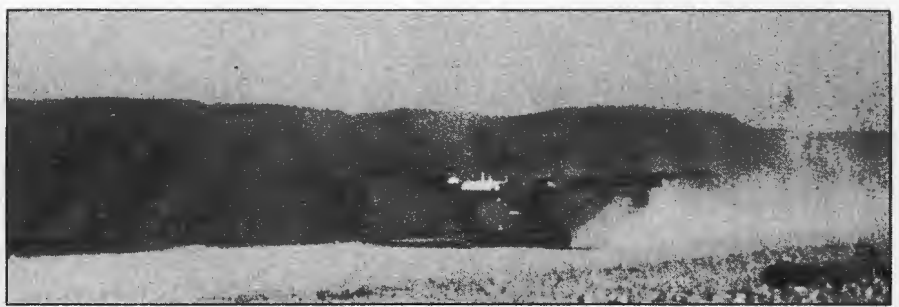
Unhampered by any challenge first rules, the AKs were the first into action. Green tracer was everywhere. The advancing artillerymen hugged the ground, but the heavier thumps of the cordon troop's FNs soon began to dominate the valley. It was clear that we had a tiger by the tail.

The most impressive aspect of the *adoo's* reaction was their speed. From secure sleep to aggressive action took only seconds. Years of living on the run had honed their reactions and instincts to a level the soldiers could never achieve. Unerringly picking the cordon's weak spot, they set off in a series of rushes down the valley, overrunning my flanking stop group as they went.

Once out of the trap they turned west toward the thickly overgrown valleys that run down into the Wadi Darbat. As we set out in pursuit I gave orders to the mobile reaction force to deploy the choppers ahead of the fleeing *adoo*. As I watched the helicopters fanning out a mile and a half in front of us, the leading section reported that they had found a blood trail.

The color and froth of the blood were clear indications of a chest wound. One *adoo* at least would have to stop soon. Sure enough the woodpecker chatter of an RPD from a small group of rocks soon sent my

**Saladin armored cars of the Oman Armoured Regiment on parade for the Sultan's Birthday. These venerable cars played a valuable part in the Dhofar war, when their 75mm guns provided direct fire support for the infantry.**



**Resupply on the Jebel can be a problem. Here a Skyvan aircraft lands on an improvised airstrip.**

leading section to ground. Some of the *adoo* had decided to make a fight of it.

They had chosen their spot well. A small clump of bushes and rocks shielded them from both sight and fire. Open ground all around would take its toll from any attacker moving across it. I certainly wasn't going to send my soldiers into those rocks without indirect fire support. I would have preferred a 2-inch mortar but, as gunners, we were not equipped with mortars. It would have to be the guns, even if the desk warriors wouldn't like it.

With my leading section very close to the enemy, and the range from the gun-position considerable, I chose a prominent tree some half a mile off as an adjusting mark from which I could move the fire onto the target. Rapidly calculating the grid reference, I sent the mission orders to the guns. A minute or so later the express train sound of the big 130mm, 40-kilo shell roared over. If we had rehearsed this fire mission a thousand times the results could not have been improved upon.

The round burst, with its characteristic black smoke, right at the base of the tree. The tree took off like a Nike missile, straight up in the air. It seemed to go up forever, but at last turned gracefully over and crashed back to the ground. There was a stunned silence. The battery sergeant major and I looked at each other in awe. Our previous experience with the 130mm had not led us to expect such first-round accuracy.

As a firepower demonstration it had its effect. The *adoo* decided that if we could do

that to a tree, we could do it to them. Three figures stood up, their arms held high in surrender. Mahmoud Saif cautiously took his soldiers forward to secure the area. The lung-shot *adoo* was by now unconscious and sinking fast. Three of his colleagues had decided to stay with him. The other three were nowhere to be seen.

As the casevac chopper spiralled down to pick up the wounded *adoo* and his comrades, we set about combing out the scrub between our position and Said's stop line. It was hot, dirty, dangerous work, and there was no sign of the *adoo*. We did find an SKS carbine hidden under a bush, but all in all it was a frustrating and wasted six hours.

Giving up the three remaining fugitives as lost, I set my signallers to establishing the high-frequency link with brigade headquarters as I composed my report. Overall the operation could be said to have been a success. We had captured four *adoo* with their weapons while suffering only three wounded, all of whom would likely recover. The intelligence department would probably be able to make some progress in debriefing our prisoners, and perhaps more cells would collapse.

The brigade commander agreed. We were stood down and ordered to return to barracks. With some relief I spoke to the battery captain on the radio and ordered him to send the transport to fetch us. Soon we were bouncing over the dirt roads toward Salalah and a hot bath. ☒

**Operational debrief. Arif (Corporal) Haji Nabi Bux relates a tale of derring-do to the author's small son. The fact that they have no language in common doesn't seem to have been a bar to conversation.**







**T**HE *Jagdkommando* are the special forces of Austria. The word *Jagdkommando* translates as "Hunter-Commando" and denotes in the Austrian army a soldier who has completed the parachute and commando courses of the state defense forces. The *Jagdkommando* themselves militarily translate the term as "Ranger" in colloquial English. The *Jagdkommando* are known by the nickname *Schlangenfresser*, which translates as "snake eaters."

The *Jagdkommandoschule* — "Hunter-Commando School" — is situated at the Maria-Theresia Military Academy, which was founded at the height of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in

Wearing maroon beret with Austrian eagle beret badge, a *Jagdkommando* sights a .30 M1 Carbine in on a potential target during a raiding exercise.

1752 at Wiener-Neustadt. Until very recently, *Jagdkommando* training was undertaken as part of the course at the *Heeressport-und-Nahkampfschule*, or HSNS — "Army Sport and Close Combat School" — also at Wiener-Neustadt, 50 kilometers south of Vienna.

Russian occupation of Austria following the Second World War ended in 1955, and a treaty was signed between the Soviet and Western power blocs which recognized the sovereignty of Austria, as a "victim of Nazi aggression." This also guaranteed the "perpetual neutrality" of Austria as a nation. The intention of all political parties in Austria was to make the country another Switzerland. But prior to this, during the joint

## SOF UNIT REPORT

# "SNAKE EATERS"

## Austria's *Jagdkommando*

by Jim Shortt

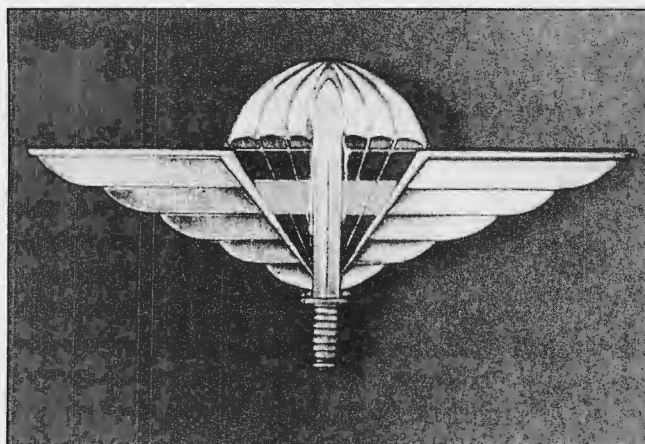
Photos Courtesy of Austrian Army

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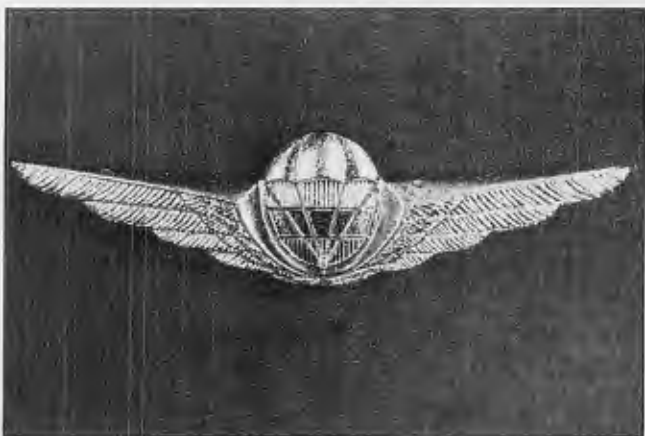
### SHORTT SUBJECTS

Jim Shortt has authored six books on military and martial arts subjects. His travels have taken him throughout Europe and to the United States, the Middle East and West Africa. He is currently director of projects for a London-based security company.

Shortt's "Brussels' Bar Simba" appeared in the last issue of SOF.



LEFT: *Jagdkommando* qualification badge, which is worn with the *Bundesheer* parachute qualification badge.



ABOVE: *Bundesheer* parachute qualification badge.

French, British and American occupation of Western Austria, three reaction battalions were formed from the existing paramilitary force — the *gendarmarie*, called *B-gendarmerie* or *Bereitschaftsgendarmerie*. These allies already saw this as the nucleus for the state army on the return of Austrian sovereignty. In 1955, 6,500 men of the *B-gendarmerie* formed the new *Bundeswehr*.

By 1960, this had become 48 battalions, divided into nine brigades — one for each of the federal states, or *Länder*. The population of Austria today is approximately eight million. The Austrian defense forces number some 13,000 regulars, 32,000 annual conscripts, 930,000 reservists and 11,250 *gendarmarie*. The air force forms part of the army (now called the *Bundesheer*) and has 2,200 regulars, 2,000 conscripts and about 750 reservists. The original laws

of 1955 made conscription universal and set a period of nine months service, without refresher training, though voluntary enlistment was permitted. This situation was amended in July 1971 when the conscript service period was reduced to six months, with 60 days refresher training with the Home Guard, for a further 13 years upon demobilization from conscription.

Wiener-Neustadt is the center for all regular officer training. The HSNS was set up at the end of 1962 as the Physical Education School of the Austrian Defense Forces, but it also included specialist training. It was built on the tradition of the old imperial Austrian institutes of cavalry, fencing and gymnastic skills, taking in the driving and equestrian schools of the Austrian First Republic (post-1918). Austrian officers in the post-1955 period had been sent abroad to attend foreign specialist military schools and return with formation

skills in specialist subjects such as Ranger training. In 1957 at the Infantry Combat School, special infantry training was undertaken for assault platoons.

On 1 May 1965, the first *Jagdkommando* course, of eight weeks duration, was started, but this excluded parachute training. By the time the 15th course was starting in 1977, training for the *Jagdkommando* lasted 20 weeks, with a selection rate of only 30 to 50 percent. Training was only for volunteer junior and senior NCOs and officers. The training was invariably at the combat school at Hainburg, and stressed close combat and combat survival

skills, woodcraft, long-range reconnaissance patrolling, fieldcraft, and alpine and parachute skills. On course completion, the personnel returned to their units to pass on and promote these skills, through instruction and field exercises, to their own men.

Such *Jagdkommando* training was introduced to the cadets of the Maria-Theresia Academy in 1967 to promote leadership skills. This course only lasted four weeks, however, and was eventually dropped when the individual *Jagdkommando* skills were absorbed into the academy's training syllabi.

In 1978, plans were laid for a permanent *Jagdkommando* unit, with



volunteer conscripts of two years duration completing a 15-month training course, later modified to 12 months with the introduction of professional soldiers in 1985. The *Jagdkommando* wear a maroon beret and a winged parachute badge over which is laid an upright sword upon the Austrian national colors of red, white and red. They wear both the *Bundesheer* parachute and *Jagdkommando* qualification badges.

Selection for the *Jagdkommando* is every two years, and volunteers report in January of that year. The

**BELOW:** Having completed the assault course, novice *Jagdkommando* deck each other during a session of unarmed combat. *Jagdkommando* training has always placed heavy emphasis on close combat skills.



recruits are psychologically and physically examined to ensure that they are able to undertake the rigorous training. At this point, approximately half the recruits are refused permission to enter specialist training. The volunteers then undergo the six months of basic training normal for the entire defense forces. On completion of this, they then are given a further nine months of voluntary extended training, totalling a training period of 15 months. Final testing includes:

- Eight-kilometer pack march in full kit with rifle and 15-kilogram backpack, to be completed on an uphill course in 75 minutes.

- Descent into water with equipment from 10 meters.



**ABOVE:** Carrying a Steyr SSG sniper rifle with night sight, a camouflaged *Jagdkommando* steals forward into hide position during an exercise.

- Water jump from one meter and then 15-minute freestyle swim with equipment.
- Five thousand meters cross-country in 27 minutes.
- Five-meter free ascent of rope.

The emphasis in specialist training takes in raiding, long-range reconnaissance, parachuting, communications and assault engineer skills. With these skills, the *Jagdkommando* support the aims of the *Bundesheer*, which in relation to national defense are:

- To respond in times of international crisis (such as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia) to protect the Austrian borders.
- To prevent Austria's being used as a route in a conflict between neighboring countries.

- To respond to a direct and dedicated attack on Austrian territory.

Weapons for the *Jagdkommando*, as with the rest of the *Bundesheer*, are

manufactured by Steyr Daimler Puch and include:

- MPi 69 (9mm submachine gun).
- StG 58 (Steyr version of the FN FAL, caliber 7.62x51mm NATO).
- SSG 69 (7.62x51mm NATO sniper rifle).
- AUG (5.56x45mm NATO bullpup assault rifle).

Unlike Switzerland, Austria is a member of the United Nations and regularly has contributed troops to U.N. service since 1960 and the Congo intervention. This has included *Jagdkommando* personnel. ✕

# WAR ZONE BOCAY

## Contra Redeyes Heat Up Nicaragua

Text & Photos by Gene Scroft

I SIGHTED in on my enemy and struck quickly. Direct hit. That mosquito wouldn't bother anyone again. This wasn't what I'd had in mind when I came to Nicaragua. I'd been sitting in the contra camp along the Bocay and Amaka rivers waiting for the Sandinista offensive for 10 days, not counting the eight days it took just to reach the contra AO, and nothing at all was happening. I decided to cut my losses and head back stateside.

That's when I heard helicopters.

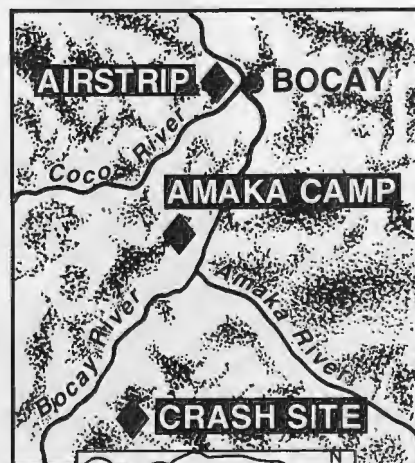
Untangling myself from my knit-type hammock, I grabbed my camera and scrambled up a hill to the 12.7mm heavy machine gun position. One hundred meters away, the Redeye gunner already had the battery in his weapon and was scanning the sky for enemy aircraft. I ran over and positioned myself next to him, hoping to get a shot of the missile launch.

Thirty minutes passed and nothing happened. We could hear the aircraft. Hell, they sounded like they were right on top of us, but we saw nothing. They were flying low and there was a large hill between our position and theirs. Since they weren't firing any ordnance it was clear they were conducting visual recon — trying to find us.

Eventually, the blade noise faded into the distance. Disappointed at the lost opportunity for some great photographs, I walked back to the MG position.

Then, out of nowhere, the enemy chop-

**LEFT:** This seven-year-old boy lived with his family — all contras — by the airstrip at the Bocay/Coco River junction. He's carrying everything he owns on his back. The box contains his pet parrot.



**ABOVE:** Bocay area, characterized by dense, lush jungle, is logistical nightmare for Sandinistas because region lacks roads.



**ABOVE:** Condor, the only contra on the Bocay River qualified as a Redeye gunner, prepares to fire. The next day he scored a kill on a Sandinista Mi-17 helicopter.

**FAR LEFT:** Mi-17 explodes into fireball after being hit by contra Redeye surface-to-air missile.

**LEFT:** Smoke from the wreckage of the downed Sandinista Mi-17 helicopter.

**BELOW LEFT:** Though primarily a troop transport helicopter, Mi-17s can be heavily armed. Visible here are missile pods used to fire 57mm rockets. The remains of a crewman's head can be distinguished just ahead of the rocket pod.



pers came thundering over the hill. The contra Redeye gunner fired immediately and the missile struck home. As I ran for cover, the jungle exploded around me. The Sandinistas began pouring rocket and Gatling-gun fire into the hill. Soon the major deficiencies of the hilltop position became all too obvious.

Contra soldiers are mostly ex-farmers and they naturally prepare their military positions the same way they prepare their fields — by slash and burn. This clears away the jungle but it also destroys concealment and makes it easy for aircraft to locate you — they just look for the bare, brown hilltop. When you combine this with the contra aversion to digging in, it's very difficult to survive a direct helicopter attack.

The Sandinista force consisted of three Mi-17s and three Mi-24s firing everything they had. I'll never forget the sound of those





Contra M60 GPMG helps stem Sandinista attack. Contra positions are often full of religious symbols such as the cross pictured here.

Gatlings. Not a burping sound like the U.S. guns but a more constant sound, like a semi's horn blowing. As I looked up I saw the struck Mi-17 engulfed in flames and falling fast.

Out of pure joy, everyone on the hilltop was firing their weapons — AKs, RPGs, M79s, anything, at the crashing copter. The other aircraft were getting the hell out of Dodge. After seeing their comrade shot down in flames, they had no stomach for a fight. Lucky for us, because we didn't have another Redeye and our 12.7mm was low on ammo.

The fiery wreckage crashed on the opposite side of the Bocay River, about two clicks from our position, sending up a huge fireball as it impacted the ground. All the boys were laughing and cheering and so was I.

I urged the contras to go investigate the crash site. They didn't have to be asked twice. Soon 10 of us were wading through the jungle toward the river. There were trails in the area but we avoided them because they might be mined. The area had been occupied by the piris (short for *piricuacos*, a derogatory Miskito Indian term for the Sandinistas meaning "rabid dogs")

a year before, and they scattered mines everywhere before they withdrew, a practice the contras don't follow because of U.S. pressure to avoid possible civilian casualties.

We waded the swift current of the Bocay in chest-deep water, soaking my camera in the process, and cautiously approached the burn-

ing wreckage. The tail section was intact, as was one of the weapon struts with two missile pods. The fuselage was broken into two parts: One part was vertical and still burning, the other was largely ash. The copter's 12.7mm heavy machine gun had broken away from the nose mount and a 7.62x54R Goryunov machine gun lay in the ashes.



Soldier of Fortune Magazine correspondent Gene Scroft carries contra with leg wound from battle for the airstrip.

## CONTRA CORRESPONDENT

Gene Scroft is the *nom de guerre* of a West Point graduate who served in the 75th Rangers and the 82nd Airborne before becoming a full-time adventurer. Scroft longed for more action than the peacetime army could offer, so after fulfilling his five-year obligation to Uncle Sam, he traveled to Central America and then Afghanistan to fight alongside the contras and mujahideen.

For more on his Afghan adventures, see "Holy War Combat Tour" and "Yank in Afghanistan" (SOF, December '86 and January '87).



At first I couldn't see any enemy dead, but then a contra pointed out a black spherical object. It was a man's head. The charred skull was barely recognizable as human except for the brown-gray brain bubbling out of it. Later, the Sandinistas admitted publicly to the loss of one aircraft and its four crewmen. It wasn't carrying soldiers when it was hit. Too bad.

After collecting a badly damaged radio and the Goryunov machine gun, we returned to our position. It took the piris about four hours to muster the nerve to send two Mi-24s back to the crash site. They do this to deprive the enemy — that's us — from retrieving anything useful. They were several hours late and a few dollars short in this respect.

After returning to camp I desperately wanted to go back to the crash site. When my camera got wet crossing the Bocay, my light meter went out and all my pictures of the helicopter were taken in unknown light. I wanted to get more with my small automatic, but no one would go with me. To make matters worse, a contra OP reported a large piri column quickly approaching the crash site. There was no military reason to

go back and the contras thought I was nuts for wanting to. Of course they were right, but getting those photos was a hell of an incentive. I went back alone.

Since I had no idea how close the Sandinistas were, I moved slowly and cautiously. I frequently halted to listen for enemy movement, and I checked the trail for Cuban-style boot marks.

When I reached the river, I quickly rushed across to minimize my exposure time. After I reached the other side, I saw an AK-armed figure walk out of the jungle and motion for me to come back across.

Christ, all this way only to be captured by the Sandinistas.

I wasn't about to just walk over there and become another Hasenfus, so I moved in toward the wreckage. A swift, ripping sound passed about four inches over my right shoulder. Anyone who's ever been in combat knows that sound.

Someone was shooting at me!

Now what the hell was I going to do? Bullets were keeping me from going forward and the ever-increasing number of soldiers on the far side kept me from going back. I decided to run through the jungle,

parallel to the river and away from everything. Just before I took off, I noticed that the soldiers across the river were wearing American gear and one was carrying a CAR-15. They were contras! My heart started beating again. They all started yelling that the piris were close and screamed at me to get back over the river. They weren't keen on having a journalist killed. Well, it looked like I wouldn't get my pictures.

The contras are well-equipped with small walkie-talkie type handheld radios, and we received word the enemy was moving toward us from the southwest in battalion strength. One of the best contra platoon commanders, Chinandega, said he was going to take his 20-odd men and trap a piri column between another contra commander and himself. He invited me to come along. He didn't have to ask twice.

We left the camp and started down the trail toward the Coco River, about five clicks distant. We'd traveled less than one click when Chinandega discovered Sandinista boot marks on the trail. Apparently advance units were already in the area. We entered the jungle and began a gruelling all-night jungle movement.



## BATTLEFIELD LOSS — PROPAGANDA VICTORY

After contra funding was cut in 1984, the FDN began to realize something the Sandinistas have known all along — propaganda triumphs are at least as important as military successes for ultimate victory.

For example, the significance of the Bocay area is political, not military. The Bocay camp was used by the FDN to show journalists the reality of their situation. Since the contras are beginners at this business, they made many mistakes. The press expected comfortable conditions, plentiful transportation and exact time schedules to meet deadlines. The contras were fighting a guerrilla war, not running a hotel chain, so they lacked many conveniences and didn't expect the press to demand them. They didn't

know the press.

As time goes on, the FDN will better understand the nuances of the propaganda game, and more accurate information will get out. Already, the major American media is beginning to understand, and report, the reality of the war.

When the Sandinistas began to read favorable reports about the contras in the free-world media, all datelined Bocay, they became furious. They were losing ground in the propaganda war — unheard of! That the average Nicaraguan doesn't have access to anything but Sandinista propaganda didn't seem to bother them. After all, this was a battle for the hearts and minds of the U.S. Congress, not the Nicaraguan people.

The attack mounted on the Bocay area on 10 May 1987 was most of all an effort to gain back the lead in the propaganda war. One day after the Sandinistas regained control of the Bocay-Amaka

area, they flew in journalists to publicize their great victory (*Newsweek*, 1 June 1987, features a great piece of Sandinista propaganda masquerading as a news story.). They announced terribly inflated contra casualty figures while only showing two naked bodies.

Even though the Sandinistas managed to reoccupy the Bocay area, I don't think they've regained the edge in the propaganda war. Some Western journalists are beginning to get wise to the communist game and are clamoring to go in when the contras retake the Bocay, which they will. Since the Sandinistas are supported only by air, with the advent of the rainy season they will be forced to withdraw as they did in 1986.

In this type of war, propaganda and military activity go hand in hand. Though the Sandinistas had a huge head start, the tide now seems to be shifting. Reality is on the side of the contras.

**LEFT:** These contra women, each brandishing an AKMS, are not camp followers but fellow combatants.

Initially, Chinandega was located toward the rear of the column. The column kept halting and getting off course so I advised him to take point. I knew from experience the only way to control a night jungle movement is for the unit leader to navigate from point.

Since I'd left my ruck back at Amaka base, I took Chinandega's so he could better break brush. He didn't have a movement azimuth, and maps are few and far between in Nicaragua, but he knew the area and his U.S. lensatic compass gave him cardinal directions.

Movement was extremely difficult. The jungle was so thick you couldn't go through it, you had to go over it. Vines had a tendency to wrap around you and your equipment even in open areas, and everything that touched skin seemed to have resinous thorns. Breaks in contact were frequent because we were moving fast and there was no moon. It took us 11 hours to move six kilometers.

When we finally broke out of the bush, there was a large river to our front. With my limited knowledge of the area, I just couldn't figure out why we had to cross a large river. I was still trying to figure this out as I crossed and climbed the opposite bank when, lo and behold, I was back on the landing strip where I'd first come in. We'd just crossed the Coco River.

Why in the hell was I back here? I wanted to cover combat against the Sandinistas, not be protected on some rear area airstrip. The contras explained that in the morning the battle would be right where we were. I didn't believe them. I'd heard that *mañana* stuff before and was convinced that they were trying to protect me.

Soaked to the skin, and with my gear still at Amaka, I stripped naked and wrapped myself in the only available fabric — a parachute — for warmth. As I faded off to sleep, I was trying to figure a way to return to combat.

I shouldn't have worried.

By 0700 the next morning the contras had set up a jungle ambush on the forward end of the airstrip and placed two 60mm mortars along the trail directly behind it. The

**TOP RIGHT:** Contra sniper armed with Romanian FPK sniper rifle scopes for targets during Sandinista attack.

**CENTER:** Sandinista mortar fire was generally ineffective but did take small toll. This contra was wounded in leg by mortar shrapnel two days before Sandinista attack on airfield.

**RIGHT:** Contra firing downhill at Sandinista assault units. Though it was necessary for the contras to lift their weapons to fire downhill, this is ridiculous.





## AN INTERVIEW WITH 380

Enrique Bermudez, aka Commander 380, is supreme military commander of the FDN. He's been fighting the Sandinistas since the beginning. No man is more respected by his soldiers and the political chiefs of the FDN. This interview was conducted on 14 May 1987 at FDN tactical headquarters, where Commander 380 lives in a single room, sharing the primitive conditions of his men.

**SOF:** How was your recent trip to the United States?

**380:** We accomplished a great deal. We have finally put together a united front of all the different military and political opponents of the Sandinista regime. No longer will the U.S. Congress be able to say that we represent only a small portion of the opposition to the Sandinistas. To indicate this new alliance, we are changing our name from the FDN to the National Resistance. Our military wing will be called the Army of National Resistance.

**SOF:** How did the U.S. aid cutoff in 1984 affect the war?

**380:** It caused us great difficulty. In 1984 we were very strong. Our infrastructure was good and our numbers were growing. When the aid was cut off, our numbers still grew but we had no food or weapons to give them. The Sandinistas made major military efforts to destroy us. They didn't succeed but we lost the initiative. With the renewed aid, we are again taking the initiative.

**SOF:** What type of military aid is most important to you right now?

**380:** (Laughing) Well, of course we need many things but I guess the most important things are better air resupply

capability and more missiles to use against helicopters.

**SOF:** As a guerrilla force, shouldn't you rely on support from the population rather than air resupply?

**380:** Look, the idea that a guerrilla can get all his support from the population is incorrect in a totalitarian regime. It's a Maoist romantic myth. It can work fine in a free democracy, but not with communism.

Let me give you an example. A communist guerrilla in El Salvador can check into a hotel in San Salvador, have a bath, rest and then go to a wholesaler and buy hundreds of boots for his men. The merchant might even give him a better deal if he buys more. Now that's free enterprise. In Nicaragua, if a farmer buys two pairs of boots, he is automatically suspected of aiding the contras. Then state security questions him and he probably ends up in jail. That's the difference between freedom and communism.

**SOF:** How do you answer critics who claim that you are not fighting and that you have no support?

**380:** How can anyone possibly think that? In 1984, when the aid was cut off, our forces had grown to over 17,000 men. If we had no support, where did these men come from?

Each year of the war we have increased our range of operations. Just this week we destroyed a POL depot on the Rama road in southern Nicaragua. Because of the aid cutoff we could only mount about 60 combat actions per month. Now we have over 300 in a month. Who can say that we don't fight!

**SOF:** Some people criticize the contras as being cruel and corrupt. . . .

**380:** The press has accused the FDN of war crimes against civilians, drug

running and theft of funds, but they are never specific. They just make broad accusations. Up to now we have never seen a specific accusation against anyone in the FDN. If they can prove anything, I will act to correct it, but I wish they would stop spreading untrue rumors about our forces.

**SOF:** What is your strategy to win the war?

**380:** We see the war in three stages. Phase one is to attack the military infrastructure. Successful attacks will create a better climate for our forces to operate in. The people will see that the communists are not all-powerful and join our forces in even greater number. Eighty percent of the people of Nicaragua hate the Sandinistas, but they are oppressed and afraid. Phase two will be the capture of large military garrisons and towns. Phase three is the final defeat of the Sandinista regime.

**SOF:** Do you think that you will continue to get aid from the United States?

**380:** Yes, I do. Most congressmen know that the Sandinistas are a threat to the security of Central America and to the security of the United States. I think Congress will pass the aid.

Look, a recent Gallup Poll showed that at least 80 percent of the people in Central America feel that the Sandinistas are a danger and that the contras should be supported. But Central American governments see that U.S. support for us is inconsistent, so they are cautious.

Give us the support we need, and the interests of the American people and the people of Nicaragua will be met.

Never has a communist regime been changed into a free democracy. Give us the aid we need and we will reverse the direction of history.

**LEFT: Contra RPG-7 gunner fires at attacking Sandinista troops.**

**RIGHT: The man under guard attempted to assassinate Enrique Bermudez, aka Commander 380. He claims to have been a captain in CODE (Special Destiny Company), whose mission is to infiltrate FDN ranks for sabotage and assassination.**

ambush was located in thick jungle where you couldn't see three feet in front of you. I moved to a mortar position, from where I could get the best view of the battle.

I figured the piris would initiate the assault with a mortar barrage or helicopter attack, so I borrowed an E-tool and started digging in. My example got no response from the contras. They just sat there watching uninterestedly. They were brave lads but needed work on basic tactics.

As it turned out, the piris didn't prep with indirect fire. They just stumbled into our ambush and we initiated. The firefight was loud but ineffective. The contras were firing on full auto and way over the Sandinistas' heads. Luckily, the piris were doing the same thing and their rounds passed harmlessly over us.

The enemy quickly disengaged and we pumped 60mm rounds into them as they retreated. We'd preregistered our two mortars along likely approach routes so I think we did some damage.

Piri helicopters prepped our resupply routes but refused to come near enough to support their ground forces. Just the threat of SAMs was enough to keep them away.

I stood directly on the airstrip and watched five Mi-24s pound the resupply trail. We were dead meat if they decided to attack, but their timidity ensured our survival.

Minutes later the piris began dropping mortar rounds on us. You wouldn't believe how fast the boys dug in when the mortars started hitting. Soon thereafter the ground attack jumped off, but the contras didn't budge an inch. AKs, M79s, an M60, and even two 40mm grenade launchers were used to force the Sandinistas back.

The enemy shifted its efforts to the Amaka River position, so I went to where our 12.7mm HMG was to get a better look. Enemy helicopters were still firing up approach routes and the hill was under intense mortar fire. I was worried but the HMG commander stood there laughing. He told me the contras had already withdrawn. Hell, let the piris waste their ammunition.

In the late afternoon, the enemy again attacked the airstrip. I ran down the hill to where the mortars were, but they'd been moved. I went forward about 50 meters looking for the front line when I realized there was no front line. They had all withdrawn. I was the only man between the Sandinistas and the airstrip. You can bet I beat a hasty retreat.

On my way back I noticed five boxes of 60mm mortar ammo lying in the bushes. I grabbed one and beat feet back to the CP,

*Continued on page 99*



## SPECIAL DESTINY ASSASSIN

*Editor's Note: This account was given firsthand to the author at FDN tactical headquarters.*

Alex Morales had a very important mission — to kill Enrique Bermudez (aka Commander 380), supreme military commander of the FDN.

A Sandinista since 1977, Morales held the rank of captain in the infamous CODE (Spanish acronym for Special Destiny Company) special forces. CODE's mission is to infiltrate the FDN and cause maximum havoc through murder and sabotage.

Morales was trained in Nicaragua by Argentine *montoneros*, terrorists who are paid in dollars by the Sandinistas to train them in subversive techniques.

One of his first missions was to transport weapons to the Salvadoran guerrillas over the Gulf of Fonseca in February 1983. His powerful speedboats were wired with explosives for quick destruction if discovered by Salvo patrol boats.

Morales received the mission to kill Commander 380 in March 1986. He immediately infiltrated a Nicaraguan refugee camp. By posing as a *campesino* (farmer), he was able to join the FDN. One day he

was fighting with the contras when 380 stopped less than 20 feet from him.

He swallowed the amphetamines he was given to ensure his bravery on this suicide mission, chambered a round in his AK and took aim at 380's head.

Miraculously, something prevented him from pulling the trigger. Unanswered questions haunted his mind. Where were all the gringo mercenaries he was told were helping the FDN? Where were all the ex-Somoza war criminals he was told fought as the FDN? Almost all of these men were farmers. What did he have against these people? Did he really want to die for the Sandinista cause?

He put down his rifle, walked up to 380 and confessed. Then 380 told him not to be afraid and that many ex-Sandinistas come over to the FDN when they see the truth.

Alex Morales is now being held in detention by the FDN while all aspects of his story are verified. FDN officials told me they plan to release their 70-odd prisoners to the Red Cross. Morales could then decide to fight with the FDN, start a new civilian life, or go back to the communists. Judging from what the Sandinistas have done in the past to those who fail to do their bidding, I doubt he'll go back to Managua.



**B**OUNCING in a pickup over flooded and rutted tracks, we finally reach the border village of Teri Mangal after a day's ride from Peshawar. It's lit up by scores of small kerosene lanterns and in the night the heavy staccato of machine guns can be heard. Tracer bullets streak toward the mountains and occasionally the hollow bang of an RPG-7 anti-tank grenade launcher punctuates the night. The mujahideen are checking the accuracy of their weapons.

Horses neigh, donkeys bray, Eastern music wails from cassette radios and everything is sunk in mud. We climb up the rickety stairs of a teahouse and turn in for the night. Moslems get up before sunrise for their first prayer.

When I finally awake, I look around the room and can't believe my eyes. The men have their hands full of weapons! On the way here they had none, only some picks and shovels. Now they're diligently clean-

ing Kalashnikovs, RPGs and a few RPD light machine guns.

We won't leave before 1500 hours, so there is plenty of time to get acquainted. I have with me 10 pages of Persian phrases and key words, while the leaders of our group between them know some 50 English words. I had no trouble communicating with the party leadership in Peshawar — all spoke good English. But what about these boys? Will they not mistake me for a spy if I tell them I'm a Latvian, if they hear that I'm from the "other" side?

I draw a map of Europe on a piece of paper and point to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, then to Moscow, then back to the Baltic countries, pressing down upon them with the palm of my hand and saying, "*Shuravi*" (Russians). They understand what I mean, and they know when it took place, because Hitler and Stalin are not unknown to them.

They ask, "Were there Baltic mujahideen?"

"*Bale*" (Yes), I say, and I show seven fingers for seven years of guerrilla struggle. Then I say, "Mujahideen *shahid*" (martyred).

Silence. Our eyes meet, and in that flicker of a second I know that they know what defeat meant for us. This "touching of souls" is something I have not felt in the West. I also see something else in their eyes — the awful question — will they suffer the same fate?

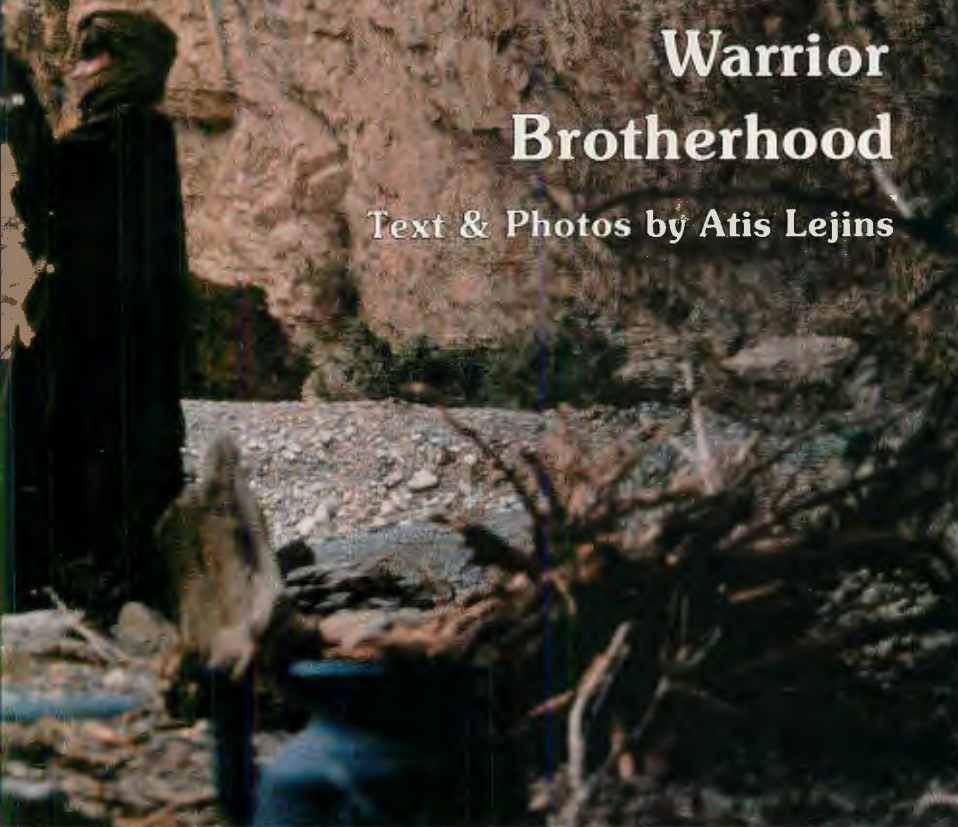
I now say that I am a Latvian, that my uncle is *shahid* (deported during the first Russian occupation in 1940) and that my family too have been refugees. These mujahideen extend to me their sympathies. We have become friends, brothers.

We are climbing a steep slope. There is an easier way to get into Afghanistan, by

# AFGHAN ODYSSEY

## Latvian Joins Warrior Brotherhood

Text & Photos by Atis Lejins



Mujahideen man the Ziqriat anti-aircraft gun in Surhab canyon. Ziqriat is a Chinese copy of the Soviet ZPU-1 anti-aircraft gun, which comprises a single KPV 14.5mm heavy machine gun with sights on a towed-carriage mounting.

way of a zigzag track on a tractor pulling a wagon, but my men think the fare is exorbitant, so instead we take the shortest possible path to the border.

I feel like I'm climbing the side of the Empire State Building. My lungs are working like bellows and a whole ocean of sweat is pouring off of me. When we reach the Pakistani border post a *chadar* (the thin blanket worn by all Afghans) is thrown over my shoulder and on top of it a Kalashnikov. Now you really can't tell me from a mujahid and I cross the border unhindered.

Opposite the Pakistani post are the ruins of the Afghan border station. The whole

area is crawling with guerrillas. Now my men are ready to avail themselves of the tractor service, and we all jump into a wagon where we mix with other armed men. We bounce down a potted incline, dodging bomb craters and hanging on for dear life to the rails of the hurtling machine.

We jump out at the first village, which is bombed, destroyed and empty. The tractor goes no farther. The landscape is stunning — mountains higher than the clouds.

Our bags are stacked on the backs of two donkeys, which trail us with the other half of our group. We tire of waiting for them and continue on our way. Our path stretches beside a creek; on its other side lie uncultivated irrigation fields. Two small Afghan ponies trot in front with huge packs on their backs, the chimes on their harnesses jingling gently. Such peace and beauty.

Suddenly, there's an enormous bang on our right. Something heavy and powerful

flies over our heads and, with a terrific blast, smashes to the ground a good distance from us.

The chubby, short mujahid who joined us in Teri Mangal, and who had a hard time climbing up the slope now takes command. Half running, we make for the creek and for the trees and bushes which grow along its winding path.

Another big bang, a sinister rush of air above us, an explosion. Madrasol, my new friend, points a finger to the hills ahead, saying, "*Dushman!*" (Enemy!) He makes circles with his fingers and thumbs, and looks through them. The Russians are observing us through binoculars.

In a cluster of aspen trees, where the two ponies are hurriedly plucking green grass, I remove my glasses (no mujahid wears them), wrap my head and shoulders in the *chadar* and wait until our leader crosses the dry bed of another creek. It must be some 200 meters to the other side, where there is another bombed-out village. Silence. Reaching the other side, he throws rocks into the branches of fruit trees and, munching the fallen fruit, waits for us.

### LATVIAN PATRIOT

Atis Lejins writes as a freelance journalist, separate from his job as an editor with the Swedish Institute of International Affairs.

Lejins was born in Latvia. He has lived in the United States, serving in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and receiving an M.A. from UCLA. Living now in Stockholm, he is separated from the land of his birth physically by the Baltic and politically by the continuing Soviet subjugation of once-independent Latvia. Lejins' interest in the liberation of Afghanistan from Soviet occupation derives from his patriotic interest in the liberation of his homeland from Soviet domination.



Author Atis Lejins (left) in mujahideen garb with mujahideen commander Tahel Shirzad in Kolangor.





Now it's my turn. Madrasol clenches my left hand and we hurry, bent over with our heads pulled in, across the mass of jumbled rocks.

Something strange curls up inside my stomach. Here there is no shelter; the terrain is as flat as a table, offering a completely unobscured view to the Russian (or Kabul?) garrison. Are there rifles powerful enough to shoot a bullet that far? Is someone peering at us through a gunsight right now? Who will the bullet strike?

Madrasol is keeping me close to his side. Only now do I fully realize that his body is shielding mine.

We're putting distance between ourselves and the garrison, moving over fields, along rows of trees and bushes that run along deserted irrigation channels. I jump into a dry ditch and my hand strikes against a child's clothes laid out on the rocky sides. A woman must have washed them, and she must have left in a very big hurry; in a poor country, clothing is not left lying around without good reason.

We're surrounded by yellow fields — wheat, not like in the West, much shorter, but wheat nonetheless. Where are the farmers? There they are, in the next bombed-out village. All have not left; some have remained, or ventured back, to eke out a living from the land. Their faces are tired and old. Sitting in a circle they watch us slog-ging through their village.

Never have I seen such destruction. Formerly solid, two-story houses made of stone and dried mud are now complete shambles. Craters, large as elephants, gape like open wounds in the earth. I poke my head through a broken garden door and see a jumble of cross-beams and sticks in the courtyard. Still, some peasants persist in living here. Other villages are completely empty. This part of Paktia leading to Lowgar is devastated.

Twilight is fast becoming night, but we have to struggle on along the muddy path, which is getting steeper and steeper. We have to reach our first *markaz* (guerrilla

**Mujahideen commander Najibullah (center, with rifle) with his men and camels in Lowgar.**

center) by midnight.

One lad with six loaded Kalashnikov magazines around his chest — with the magazine in his rifle this makes 210 rounds — hands me a strong stick.

"*Teshakur*" (Thank you), I say. It isn't long before we come upon a camel caravan and I realize how grateful I really am.

As the big animals slowly pick their way down the hill, they have the right-of-way; we must slide past them off the track. The walking stick is a lifesaver as I try to keep my balance and avoid being jabbed in the eyes by the roughly hewed logs the camels are carrying.

The logs are long and heavy — how can these camels carry them? They are being taken to Pakistan. Apparently the war has not disrupted this ancient trade, but here, closer to the border, the caravan must move under cover of darkness. Will it ever end? There must be a hundred of these big brutes.

Finally they pass and we can climb back on the path. The rain has stopped, and on the horizon white lightning is still flickering, but without thunder. The path ends and we're struggling up the bed of a creek, sometimes hopping over rocks in running water.

Rocks everywhere, sharp and jagged. My chubby friend is beaming his pocket torch in front of me so that I can have some idea where I'm putting my feet. Some of the men in front also have their miniature pocket torches on, but I left mine in my bag on the donkey. Never would I have imagined that in these night marches we would be using such lights! Where are the famous Russian commandos, the dreaded *Spetsnaz*, who lie in wait along such paths and ambush unsuspecting guerrillas? Here there must be too many mujahideen for them to make an appearance.

My men climb on and on, now and then inquiring about the state of my *pai* (legs).

"*Pai khob*" (My legs are good), I lie.

Drenched in sweat and with parched mouths, we finally arrive at the *markaz* at midnight. I sit down and observe my new surroundings. We're in an underground bunker and my guerrillas are sitting around with others. Now and then a tiny sand stream pours down on my head; the roof must be covered with earth. A single kerosene lamp lights up the men's sunburnt faces — sharp, hard features that look as if they have been hewn out of granite.

Who are these people? Wherein lies their strength? They have dared to take up arms against Soviet power, sword against sword. No paperwork here, no letters of protest. If the Russians show themselves, they will be hit by a hail of lead. That's why they stay away, shooting only from a distance, throwing bombs down from the sky.

Madrasol is telling the others about Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. I can clearly hear those names. The men are listening. They are thankful for the medical aid the Swedes are shipping them, but can't understand why they don't send weapons. I'm hard put to give an answer because I really don't understand that myself. Sweden did give weapons, quietly, to Finland when the Finns were fighting for their lives in the Winter War against Russia. Checks were written out to liberation movements in Africa with no questions asked. Why not Afghanistan? An abstract concept like "neutrality" is incomprehensible to these men. Their people are dying, and they need weapons.

I am pressed to give an answer. I try to make them understand that Russia, having devoured the Baltic states, is now much closer to Sweden. Soviet submarines cruise about in Swedish waters and maybe the Swedes are afraid to give weapons to somebody at war with the Russians, their mighty neighbors.

They ask, "Did they give weapons to the Baltic mujahideen?"

"No," I reply.

We turn in for the night, packed together like sardines. The local guerrillas have left and, before I collapse into sleep, I hear the sound of their small metal whistles as they communicate with one another from their sentry posts. Walkie-talkies would be better, I muse.

When I wake up, the hut is empty. I creep outside and see the sun already climbing in the sky. And again the panorama — huge fir trees occasionally covering the slopes of mountains; jagged, bold rocks reaching for the blue sky through the flimsy clouds.

I wash in clear spring water, drink tea with the troops and inspect the camp. The commander shows me deep caves, dynamited in the stony ground, that serve as air-raid shelters. He proudly shows off his "*Ziqriat*," a Chinese anti-aircraft gun. I take pictures. Then he gives us four of his men who will take us to the next *markaz*.

Approaching us is a pony carrying a man and two small boys. Their faces are lifeless.



I ask why. The guerrilla leading the horses stops and one of the boys raises his arm; the hand is wrapped in rags and is seeping blood. A Russian bomb, I am told, and they hurry on to Pakistan.

Today is like a walk on a Sunday. My legs don't hurt anymore, the sun is shining and the passage between the mountains and hills is easy and wide.

We join a long stream of mujahideen walking to different points in Afghanistan. I see Turkmen heading for the northern border. Their commander has lost his eye in Tadjikistan SSR, where he has led several military excursions across the Amur river.

At the first "hotel" — a very crude clay, stone and wood hut where tea, bread and rice can be bought — we run into our donkey unit. It bypassed us in the night and now, delighted, the men greet us with smiles and handshakes. This group is led by one called Sofi. A competition of sorts has sprung up between him and myself — who will beat the other to the next hotel?

We meet a caravan of five camels and one baby camel. The commander of this group, Engineer Nadzhibur, a proud and handsome man, speaks good English. He apologizes to me that he is not able to receive me properly, that his country is in such a bad state. He explains that the Russians have occupied his land and he has to drive them out. Then he asks, "Where are you from?"

"Sweden," I answer.

He thanks me for coming to his country, and then continues his trek to Pakistan for new provisions. He will be back in a month.

We spend the night in another hotel. We still have to cross the Goban mountain to reach the Surhab *markaz* on the other side.

The Goban mountain almost does me in. I explain to the men that I'm an old man; I point to myself and count up to 43 with my fingers. They laugh and take another rest for my sake. I wonder why I'm panting so much; I'm in top physical shape again. Then it comes to me — of course — the air up here is much thinner.

**Mujahideen commander Tahl Shirzad (second from right) with his people in Kolangor.**

We finally make it to the top, and we see small groups of refugees coming toward us. On ponies and donkeys are men, women and children; they are from Mazar-i-Sharif on the Soviet border. As we come into the Surhab canyon we see many groups traveling on foot. A little girl, wearing plastic sandals, sits on a rock; she can't go any farther.

At the entrance to the Surhab canyon there is much movement. There are several hotels here and many camels. Entering the canyon itself is almost like entering a cave; the tops of the opposite cliffs almost touch, leaving a space of only a few meters. The base is wider, with a running spring in the middle.

It would be hardly possible to drop a bomb through the crack of this canyon's "roof," but if the unlikely happened there would not be much left of the scores of mujahideen ponies and donkeys standing here. The guerrillas would be all right, though, for they have built strong stone walls along the base of the canyon.

Farther on, the canyon widens. Not much skill would be required to get a bomb in here. Pieces of bomb casings are indeed scattered about everywhere.

Sure enough, the first MiG soon appears, slowly flying over us and then back, circling. We creep under an overhang. It flies away, and we go on.

More MiGs — this time two together, circling fairly low. I'm getting a little worried. The jets fly off, but then return, and now I feel absolutely worried — the mujahideen don't have any antiaircraft missiles.

A "Dashika" fires off a few rounds. This heavy machine gun is smaller than the Ziqriat, but with luck a bullet from it could hit a jet. It seems to scare off the planes, but pretty soon they come back. This time a Ziqriat lets go and it sounds vastly more powerful than the Dashika. The aircraft dis-

appear.

Thank you, China, for the Ziqriat, I think to myself. I am relieved, but maybe the Ziqriat should have kept quiet. The jets were not bombing and maybe they simply wanted to know where it was.

Up until now I have only seen Chinese weapons, but journalists in Peshawar say that even these supplies are financed in large part by the United States. Other weapons have been taken from the Russians.

The commander of the Ziqriat crew welcomes us, and we stay for lunch. The men smile at me and ask the same questions I heard on the way here. "We need Stingers," they say. "When is America going to give us Stingers? If America won't, why can't Sweden?" [Editor's note: For an update on Stingers and the mujahideen, see "The Sting That Kills," beginning on page 44 of this issue.]

We leave the Surhab canyon, passing about six or eight destroyed Soviet armed vehicles. This must have been done early in the war, when the Russians didn't know better than to force their way up the canyon.

At the canyon exit lies a village in ruins, and beyond that irrigation fields, fed by a spring that is clear and clean. I drink until my belly is ready to burst. Looking up I see shepherds driving sheep and goats toward the safety of the canyon. Some of the fields are under cultivation.

We go past silent, ruined villages and past villages untouched by bombs but deserted nevertheless. In some, however, there is life; not all have left for Pakistan. Two small boys on donkeys drive some cows and goats up the slope from the valley, where wheat is being harvested.

We finally reach Chambul, a giant hill of rock rising out of the slope leading down to the irrigation fields. Mud huts line its side facing the creek and hidden behind them are several caves. I sit on the roof of one of the huts, soothing my huge blisters, and wonder



**Two 15-year-old mujahideen in Kolangor.**



why the Russians haven't bombed this guerrilla stronghold to pieces. There can't be an easier target than this solitary rock.

Two mujahideen parties live here side by side — *Jamiat*, the party of Massoud, the famous commander in the Panjshir Valley, and “my” party. Farther on in the next village, *Hezb-i-Islami* reigns supreme. People are reluctant to talk about this party and I gather that it is not too popular. Its leader is Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an extreme fundamentalist.

After dinner the men pile their weapons in front of Madrasol, who writes down their identification numbers in a notebook. Here I also meet Dr. Farid, who takes care of the whole Surhab zone and who gets his medical supplies from the Swedish Committee in Peshawar. He speaks English and invites me to stay in his cave.

The bombing starts about 0500. MiGs and Tu-28 bombers are pounding away at a village

called Zerekal, less than two kilometers from Chambul in the direction of Surhab canyon. Farther to the left, up on a bare mountain slope, is another target for the jets. They are dropping cluster bombs that explode with devastating force split seconds apart, shooting flames up into the sky.

There is no antiaircraft fire other than RPG-7 anti-tank rockets, and these are fired mostly from our position. The planes dive down with an awful noise, leaving behind them in the sky red balls of fire — flares — that are to divert any SAM-7 rockets fired at them. They release their cargoes of destruction and, climbing steeply, roar off again.

By about 1000 hours the attack peters out and I can take a much-needed bath down in the creek. There are still planes flying but I can't be seen. I am protected by the aspen trees whose tops form a roof over the rushing creek.

In the afternoon comes news that two mujahideen have been killed and another

five wounded in Zerekal. I am also told that it is impossible to take me to the chief commander. He has Soviet prisoners, among whom perhaps are Balts. The situation has become too dangerous, and I will be taken to Kolangor, out of danger.

I say goodbye to Madrasol and the other men; they have to take another route, checking the party's other units and weapons. Sofi and four armed guerrillas from Surhab will take me to Kolangor. I'm bundled up in the *chadar* again and my camera is taken from me. Three of the guerrillas, then Sofi himself, advance ahead to check if the way is safe; this is the standard procedure, but now they seem to be extra cautious.

I am alone in a flat desert with Bazmahmad, who, like Sofi, doesn't speak a word of English. He points to tank tracks in the hard earth and says, “*Djang, zjat djang*” (Big battle). Many guerrillas *shahid*.

Sofi appears up ahead and, at the entrance to Zarusnar, a small town, the other men.



**Mujahideen in Chambul.**

By now it's pouring and the streets are a veritable mudbath. We slosh through the town, where Sofi sends for four more men armed with RPG-7s and RPDs. The rain stops and I can see that we are approaching two low hills through which leads a pass.

Again I'm alone, now with Sofi. I want to hurry on, but he beckons to me to stay at his side. It is night when we come into the pass and he squats down, listening intently. I want to know what is happening. He points a finger to the hills and softly says, "Dushman."

So that's it — Russian commandos! We hurry on, silent as mice.

Sofi sees them before I do — the three shadows that spring up out of the black ground. They are extra guards he engaged in the town. One of them points ahead with his hand and says, "Herakat" (Forward). Apparently the way is safe, but where are

the others?

They stay, we move on. Bazmahumad appears again out of nowhere and we increase our pace. Sofi carries me on his back over a rushing creek and my mouth is so parched I almost bend down to drink the muddy water. I hear soft whistles, and soon the other boys show up.

At one moment the lights of the Russian-controlled town of Pol-i-Alam are on my right, at another on my left. We must be going in circles. Now and then a powerful flare shoots up into the night sky from one of the Russian bases. I'm thankful for this, for the faint light helps us to see our way a bit. No pocket torches now. Sometimes the beam of a searchlight stabs the darkness; they must be from smaller, local government garrisons.

We pass through one small village after another. Here and there a faint light flickers behind a window. Dogs bark when we hurry past houses with people. Once, we hear an

angry woman shouting and we lose no time in moving on.

We grunt gingerly along the narrow, slippery paths on top of dykes, water all around. Sofi leads me by the hand now, because once I fell flat on my face — I didn't notice the hole in front of me. I put my feet deliberately in puddles to extinguish the fire burning under my soles from blisters that now must be as big as pillows.

I'm almost ready to regret this night maneuver, but with a sudden rush I remember everything I have read and heard about guerrillas and guerrilla warfare. Now I am getting some firsthand lessons in what it really is all about.

Another thought flashes through my mind now and then. What if there is a *Spetsnaz* unit lying in wait for us? How many of us would survive the first burst of automatic gunfire? What would it feel like to have a bullet tear through my flesh? But that is precisely why Sofi has chosen these tortuous paths, just in case.

We divide into two groups. Sofi knocks softly on a door and we enter the courtyard of a farmhouse. Tahel Shirzad, Kolangor's

*Continued on page 91*



Mujahideen enter the vast Surhab canyon, site of a guerrilla center, or *markaz*.



Mujahideen inside Surhab canyon stand ready for attack from above. Soviet and Soviet-backed Afghan government forces attacked the guerrilla stronghold between the author's trips through.

# PARACAIDISTA!

## RLI Jumps Into Salvador

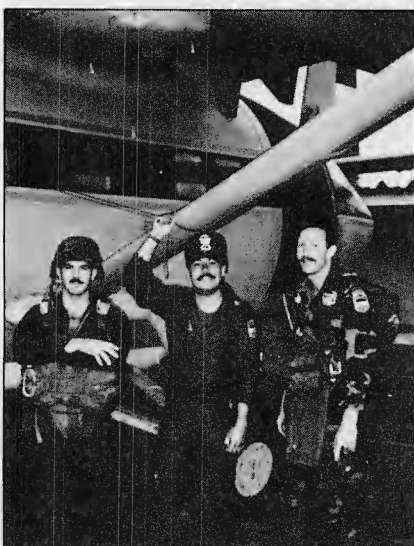
by John Coleman

Photos by Steve Salisbury



Masquerading as Captain Hurtado of the Parachute Battalion, SOF Senior Editor John Coleman blends inconspicuously with other Salvadoran jumpers.

USMC vet Carlos Cucalon, the "real" Captain Hurtado and SOF Senior Editor Coleman. Approximately 40 "old timers," including a U.S. Army major, went out the door with the basic para class.



I'D never jumped from an Israeli IAI 210 Arava. Nor had I ever jumped with a T-10 parachute strapped to my back. In fact, I hadn't jumped at all since late 1979 when I went out the door on a Rhodesian fireforce callout.

I guess my time had come.

I was down to my last few days in El Salvador on assignment for the magazine when I met up with an old friend of ours, a USMC vet and native Salvadoran by the name of Carlos.

"Hey, I'm jumping Tuesday morning with the Parachute Battalion," he told me. "Want to come along?"

It was about as simple as that. Tuesday morning at oh-dark-thirty, Carlos picked me up, and about 30 minutes later we were mingling with some 250 fully kitted Salvadoran troopies waiting to make their first jump out of Ilopango air base.

A short, tough-looking Salvadoran para sergeant came up and planted himself in front of me.

"So, you want to jump?"

I nodded, and figured this was crunch time. I mean, if someone just wandered out to the Airborne Department at Fort Benning, or the Rhodesian Para School at New Sarum Air Force Base, and said, "Chute me

up, I want to jump," they'd be laughed all the way to the detention center.

Instead: "OK. We've got to find you a uniform." How about that.

Thirty minutes later, just as first light hit, I was wearing a pair of cammies which said I was Airborne- and Ranger-qualified Captain Hurtado of the Parachute Battalion. Well, two out of four wasn't bad.

"When did you last jump?" the stocky para sergeant demanded.

"Oh, 'bout two years ago," I lied nonchalantly. I figured once you jumped, no matter when you did it, you could do it again, but a seven-year absence might be just a bit too much.

He squinted at me, eyes saying, "Sure you did, buddy, but it's *your ass*," and shoved a T-10 and reserve in my face. It took me a minute to figure out — my Africa jumps were all with Mark I Saviacs — but since I ended up feeling strangled in all the right places, I knew I'd gotten everything hooked up right.

The first lift was scheduled for around 0630; it would be a 10-minute flight to the drop zone — an old cane field — located literally across the road from the Salvadoran army cavalry outfit. 0630 came and went. 0700 came and went. Around 0730, the first load of troops loaded onto the C-123, the two C-47s and the Arava. 0800 came and went, and still no pilots. A rumor swept through the ranks that they were eating breakfast. For the troopies who had been sitting around, chutes strapped to their bods, since 0330, it was turning out to be a long day.

Finally, around 0900, the pilots appeared. It wasn't breakfast that had held us up, but visibility over the DZ.

Engines fired, the four jump craft taxied, then lifted off into the hazy sky. I had a look at the faces of the kids in the next lift as they watched the birds go airborne. Most, if not all, of them had never even flown before, much less jumped. A little fear of the unknown came through in their forced smiles, and their chatter of 10 minutes earlier died a sudden death. But they were going to go, regardless. You could see that.

Some 20 minutes later, the four birds swept back into Ilopango, gathered up the second lift, then vanished back into the haze. We got the word that the first jump had gone well, that there was only a gentle

**RIGHT:** "Stand in the door!" After a six-hour wait on the runway, the Salvo troopers were more than ready to jump.

**FAR RIGHT:** "Go!" Of the 250 fledgling Salvadoran Paras, only one refused to jump. They threw him out anyway.

6-knot breeze on the DZ. Gentle breeze or not, I spent the next 20 minutes practicing side lefts and rights in my mind.

Then it was our turn. Accompanied by 16 or so troopies blaring — in Spanish — "Glory, glory, what a helluva way to die," the pilot gunned the Arava's twin Pratt & Whitney turboprops and we were off.

Four of us had done this sort of madness before, so we comprised the first quick stick: Once the first man got his "go," the other three of us would just head out without command.

I don't speak Spanish, but the commands "Stand up. Hook up. Check equipment. Count off" are the same in everyone's airborne. Seconds away from the DZ, the jumpmaster shouted, "Stand in the door!" I swore then, and still do, that he said it in English.

"Go!" In a split second I was out the door. I watched the tail boom of the Arava sweep by, then looked up to see that wonderful half-balloon of green parachute pop out, catch the air, then dangle my 200 pounds some 1,200 feet above the ground.

My old instincts honed from 20-odd combat blasts with the RLI fireforce in Rhodesia took over. We jumped at 500 feet then, and I set myself for a quick landing. Only this time I had seconds to spare, and no one was shooting at me. It was sweet, and I enjoyed every second of it.

In a puff of powdered dirt off the cane field, I pulled off a passable PLF and spent the next few minutes dodging fledgling paratroopers making their arrivals back to Mother Earth.

While we regrouped by the deuce-and-a-halves at the edge of the DZ, I took another look at the faces of these young kids who had just made their first blast out the door. Awe, perhaps. Relief, certainly.

"How'd you like it?" I asked four of them through Carlos, who interpreted.

They popped to attention with smiles and grins. They loved it.

"Ready to go again tomorrow?"

You bet.

"Was all the training worth it?"

One of the troopers looked around to see if any of the training cadre were nearby.

"No," he said solemnly, shaking his head.

"Too many pushups."

The training officers must have wondered about the gringo who was doubled over laughing, but the kid's secret was safe with me. ✕

**CENTER:** "Legs locked together, chin tucked and elbows in." Oh well...

**RIGHT:** It's a long way down, but the only casualties were two lost steel pots.



# ANGOLAN FIREFIGHT

## SADF Pathfinders and SWAPO Shootout

Text & Photos by Ken Gaudet



**F**INALLY, during mid-January 1981, my unit — Pathfinder Company of the South African 44 Para Brigade — received orders for its first external military operation into Angola.

Our mission: to locate a Russian-built aircraft that had crashed about 100 kilometers from the South-West Africa/Angola border. We were to operate in three teams of four and, by using overlapping patrol grids, find the aircraft and gather as much intelligence as possible on aircraft type, survivors and equipment on board. We were also to update any troop or vehicle movements in the area.

Only three members of the unit had ever been into Angola before. My teammate, also an American, and I had been across the border on resupply missions for 32 Battalion. Our company sergeant major, CSM MacAleese, had seen earlier service in 1975 as part of "Colonel" Callan's abortive merc operation.

Although our CO — I'll call him

**Pathfinders gather on South-West Africa/Angola border. South Africa's Pathfinders were mostly foreigners.**

Colonel Carpenter — had pushed hard for this mission, the SADF (South African Defence Forces) command was very hesitant about giving us any missions at all. We Pathfinders were mostly foreigners, with up to 95 percent signed on from Rhodesia. Some headquarters officers didn't even know our unit existed.

As usual in the military, though, the good ops never come around as planned, and our mission to find the downed Russian plane was cancelled. But, also as usual, there was an alternate plan.

The Paras, along with 32 and 31 Battalions (the latter made up of Bushman trackers), were going to assault three known terrorist base camps inside Angola. My unit's new orders were to attach our personnel to the Para company and work with them during the operation.

### PATHFINDER YANK

American Ken Gaudet was a Pathfinder corporal during the mission he describes here. Prior to his time in action for South Africa, he fought with the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI). Before that, he fought in Vietnam with the U.S. Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade, where his decorations included two Bronze Stars, the Air Medal, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Purple Heart.

Gaudet described the grueling Pathfinder training and qualification course in "SADF's Pathfinders," SOF, May '86.

Author Ken Gaudet takes a rest break in the bush. Rifle is an R4, South African copy of Israeli Galil.



## ANGOLA/SOUTH-WEST AFRICA JANUARY 1981

At first everyone was disappointed. We'd wanted to pull our own mission and it'd been yanked out from under us. But thoughts of the impending action inside Angola soon displaced our regrets.

Since the majority of our vets had Rhodesian service with the SAS or RLI, we had visions of past raids into Zambia and Mozambique, where up to 2,000 terrors were killed by a raiding force of 250-300 troopers. As the expression went in Rhodesia, we hoped this mission would result in "long floppy slotting, ek se." (Translation: "Lots of [terrorist] kills, I say.")

As things worked out, two troopers from our Pathfinder company were assigned to each *valk* (squad) of the Para company for the mission. A *valk* usually consisted of up to 12 men and sported two FN MAG 58 GPMGs for firepower. Because of our Rhodesian service, we were looked upon as old hands at terrorist base-camp removal and were received wholeheartedly.

The first problem, as usual in the supposedly bilingual SADF, was to explain to the *valk* commander that we did not speak Afrikaans; would he please give patrol orders in English? Indeed he would, and after a nighttime briefing we were ready at first light to load up into our French-made Puma helicopters and establish an FOB (forward operating base) 30 kilometers inside Angola.

The overall mission plan called for us to establish the FOB to act as the supply and refueling point inside Angola, then hit the three terrorist base camps from there. This tactic had been used very successfully by the Rhodesians inside Mozambique and Zambia.

We lifted off at dawn and, even though I'd been in quite a number of combat assaults in Vietnam, Rhodesia, Zambia and Mozambique, the combat butterflies were loose in the pit of my stomach on this one. I'd seen a chopper loaded with paras get shot down over Mozambique, and I knew we weren't any more invincible in the air over Angola.

The advance unit hit a hot LZ as they landed in the town of Cuamato, the site of our planned FOB. The resistance was light, though, and after a brief firefight the SWAPO (South-West Africa People's Organization) terrorist unit in the town fled, leaving two KIAs, one usable RPD light machine gun and a couple of AKs.

My chopper was the second one in and we landed next to the local well. Our lieutenant immediately put our *valk* out in a defensive position on the north side of town to cover the road entrance. My fellow Pathfinder in the *valk* was a Frenchman, Corporal Busmey, and Frenchie and I settled down under a big baobab tree to cover the road.

Sitting at the base of the big tree was a pouch containing two RPD drums — either a great find or a great boobytrap. I called the patrol leader over and showed



Pathfinders from 44 Para Brigade, South African Defence Forces (SADF), joined two other battalions in an assault on a terrorist camp inside Angola.

approximately five kilometers around the town to look for any signs of terrors or FAPLA (Angolan) troops. Since there had been enemy troops in the town when we landed, it was possible others were still in the area.

Our patrol consisted of a lieutenant and a sergeant, two corporals, eight troopers, Frenchie and myself. We moved out using the Paras' standard box formation: a machine gun on each flank and two forward scouts, with the patrol leader

Whenever arms or ammunition were found in a *kraal*, the hut was burned.

him the gear. I attached a length of parachute cord to the pouch, and we shielded ourselves behind the baobab. I gave the cord a good long pull, half expecting an explosion. Nothing. Luckily, the pouch wasn't boobytrapped. We had only five or so of the drums for our unit's RPD back at home base, and two more would be welcome additions to the armory.

Frenchie and I stayed at that position under the baobab for about two hours, then we received orders to kit up for a clearance patrol around the area.

The patrol's mission was to move





usually in the center. We expected the patrol would not take too long, say about three hours, but Frenchie was bitching; he was mostly concerned that we'd still be wandering around the bush when the raid on the terrorist base camps jumped off. Little did we know that within those three hours we'd find ourselves fighting for our lives in the trench lines around one of those camps.

When the clearance patrol moved out, I was quite surprised at the slack attitude of the Paras. Their weapons were casually slung over their shoulders and noise discipline was nonexistent. It reminded me of the Vietnamese CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) I had worked with during my tour, and I wasn't impressed.

Frenchie and I carried our weapons at the ready. Some of the Paras snickered at our attitude, but I thought to hell with them. If the shit hit the fan, at least Frenchie and I'd be ready.

The patrol moved at a casual pace and, after about an hour, we took a break. As I took up a defensive position by a bush, the Para sergeant came over to talk.

He was interested in my webbing and equipment. I had my webbing converted to accommodate the 30-round magazines for the R4 rifle, and I usually carried 10 mags. As standard procedure in the Pathfinder Company, along with the 10 mags we carried two water bottles, one day's rations, poncho, personal first aid kit, strobe light and an emergency pack containing fire-starting kit, signal mirror and fluorescent panel for identification. I also carried a custom-made Angus Arbuckle combat knife and my personal pistol, a 9mm Beretta with suppressor.

The Para sergeant was most curious about what a Yank was doing fighting with the SADF. I told him about fighting in Rhodesia and about my one-year contract in South Africa. It wasn't for the money, I explained, because we weren't paid that much; it was for the adventure, and for a personal ideal — to combat terrorists.

As the patrol moved out, the forward scouts spotted two terrs to their front. They radioed the information to the lieutenant, and he split up the patrol into two groups and moved out with one of them to the scouts' location.

The sergeant was left back in command of my group. The word was passed by radio that terrs had been spotted and the lieutenant and his section were in pursuit.

About 10 minutes later, small-arms fire broke the silence, followed by mortar fire. The lieutenant radioed back that they had followed the terrs all the way to their base camp, and now they were under heavy fire. We monitored his call back to the FOB commander requesting more troops.

Within minutes we would have helicopters coming our way. Our job was



South African officers examine a Soviet-made 14.5mm heavy machine gun captured from the terrs.

to secure the LZ and guide the other patrols to the lieutenant's position. Meanwhile, another chopper was put in the air to find the terrorist base camp. When the reinforcements arrived, I was glad to see the rest of the Pathfinders among them.

"What have you got us into, you bloody Yank?" CSM MacAleese demanded with a grin. I told him I didn't know, but it sure sounded like a good punch-up in the making. We got ready to move out.

The small-arms and mortar fire we heard was joined by heavier fire from 14.5mm and 23mm guns. We knew then that this was a big camp and called for more air support while we moved to the contact area. South African gunships flew over the camp firing their 20mm guns as we linked up with the lieutenant and his men about 100 meters outside the camp proper. Our orders were to move in and capture the terrorist camp before nightfall.

Rifle fire was steadily coming toward our position, but most of it was over our heads and we were sustaining no casualties. All together we had a force of about 60 troops. Also, two stop groups from 31 and 32 Battalions had been choppered in to act as a blocking force behind the camp.

CSM MacAleese asked for volunteers

to assault forward into the terrs' trench line and establish covering fire while the remainder of our force moved in. One of the Pathfinders, Corporal Gilmour, and two of the Paras spoke up.

MacAleese and the three men charged across the open area between us and the first bunker while we laid down covering fire for them. Two terrorists jumped out of the bunker to take them on, but Gilmour killed both. He then tossed a white phosphorus grenade into the bunker.

The other terrs in the outer trench line fired back on the advancing Paras while falling back to their inner trench line. As soon as MacAleese and his team reached the outer trench line, the *valk* I was attached to charged across from the tree line to join them.

The outer trenches soon were in chaos, filled with Paras who seemed not to know what to do next. The terrs were hitting us from the inner trench line with everything they had — AKs, RPDs, even 14.5mm heavy machine guns and a 75mm recoilless rifle.

The Para sergeant I'd talked with during the clearance patrol break told his lieutenant he was going to move forward



and capture the 75mm recoilless rifle. He moved out to throw a grenade, but was hit in the head and fell in a lifeless heap. The young lieutenant saw his sergeant go down and went out to help him. When he turned around to give his Paras instructions, he was shot in the back. One of his troops went out, pulled him under cover, and started working to stop the bleeding.

Word came down for us to pull back out of the trench line into the trees and await further orders. Four Paras grabbed hold of the dead sergeant to move him back to the tree line, and CSM MacAleese carried the wounded officer. During the pull-out, panic set in among some of the Paras and they began to run.

CSM MacAleese, with the aid of the Pathfinder corporals, stopped their flight. "Hold your ground!" MacAleese bellowed. "Paratroopers don't run from terrors!"

We got our troops reorganized. My group set up to protect our outer perimeter. Gilmour's group made ready to be our forward element once word was given to move back to the FOB at Cuamato, and Frenchie's group prepared our wounded for transport.

It was around 2000 hours and darkness had set in. The helicopters wouldn't fly after dark, so our only option was to walk out with our wounded and dead

back to Cuamato, about five kilometers away. I knew we had to move out soon because, from my position only about 200 meters away from the enemy camp, I could tell that the terrors were getting organized to counterattack.

Just when we were ready to start the move back to the FOB, we heard the familiar WOOMP of mortar rounds leaving their tubes. The terrors had been sporadically firing into our position with small arms, with no effect. Now they were using their mortars, slowly creeping the barrage into us. The radio reported one Para killed by the mortar fire and two others wounded. We moved out quickly. After about 10 minutes the mortaring and small-arms fire finally ceased.

Our concern switched to getting back into the FOB without getting shot up by the guards. These troops were mainly Bushmen from 31 Battalion, so we knew there could be a communication problem. And, with all the action going on in the bush, we also knew they'd be anxious about any contact.

After two hours of walking we were about 500 meters outside the base when we received the signal to identify ourselves. CSM MacAleese switched on his strobe light and we waited for confirmation. A green star cluster briefly lit up the sky, and we at last moved into the camp.

We immediately got our wounded into the makeshift hospital so their wounds could be stabilized before they were evacuated back to South-West Africa. Sticks of Paras were set out in a defensive perimeter around the camp, and some of the Bushman 31 Battalion's recce unit were moved about two kilometers out to provide an early warning system in case the terrors attacked. That would allow enough time in the event of an attack for the helicopters to respond from South-West Africa to evacuate our units. (Usual practice for

**Dead SWAPO terr felled on the outskirts of terrorists' base camp.**



external units over the Angolan border was to have helicopters on 24-hour call in South-West Africa in case they were needed. Only if the operation was of major proportions did the choppers stay in Angola.)

The night proved uneventful. At first light, helicopters picked up the two companies of 32 and 31 Battalion soldiers and four sticks of Paras for the second assault on the enemy base camp.

In preparation for the airmobile assault, our mortar positions opened up on the terr camp with a barrage of high explosive and white phosphorus rounds. After the mortars stopped, two helicopter gunships circled the camp, blasting terr positions and gun emplacements with their 20mm cannons. Soon enough, the gunships ceased firing, joining the mortars on standby. The assault force went in. As the first choppers set down, CSM MacAleese and his group of Paras immediately captured two terrors, who were sent to the rear for interrogation.

This assault and camp-clearing operation took most of the day. As it turned out, there was only a token defensive force left in the terrorist base camp. The rest of the terrors had abandoned the camp during the night, leaving about 20 of their mates holding the bag.

During the day, the Paras moved out all the 14.5mm and 12.7mm heavy machine guns as well as the Chinese 75mm recoilless rifle that the Para sergeant had died trying to destroy. Ammo bunkers and fuel depots were blown in place. The next day, all the South African troops were airlifted back into South-West Africa.

In all, 71 SWAPO terrors had been killed, five captured and an unknown number wounded; two South African Paras had been killed and five wounded. We'd also captured a good bit of terr weaponry that would later be used against them and their Angolan and Cuban allies.

It wasn't like the Rhodesia days, but it would do. ✕

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1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. If you buy SOF on the newsstand, how long have you been reading SOF \_\_\_\_\_ and how many issues have you bought in the last six months? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you a: veteran \_\_\_\_\_, active duty military \_\_\_\_\_, reservist \_\_\_\_\_, law enforcement officer \_\_\_\_\_, other (describe)? \_\_\_\_\_

## II. READER SURVEY

1. If you are a subscriber, go to question 2. If you bought this issue at a newsstand, what influence did the cover have on your purchasing decision? Please rate on a scale from 1 (excellent — influenced you to buy this issue) to 5 (poor — bought this issue in spite of the cover). \_\_\_\_\_

2. SOF is interested in what its readers think about the subjects of the articles in the September 1987 issue and how well the readers feel the authors handled those subjects.

A) How interesting did you find the subject matter? Circle the number under the appropriate heading.

Title	Very Interesting	Somewhat Interesting	Not Interesting
Interview: Harold W. Ezell .....	1	2	3
Guns Behind the Great Wall .....	1	2	3
Salvador SitRep .....	1	2	3
The Sting That Kills .....	1	2	3
Firing the SA80 .....	1	2	3
Dawn Assault in Dhofar .....	1	2	3
"Snake Eaters" .....	1	2	3
War Zone Bocay .....	1	2	3
Afghan Odyssey .....	1	2	3
Angolan Firefight .....	1	2	3
Paracaidista! .....	1	2	3
Danner's Fort Lewis Boot .....	1	2	3
Junk or Jewels .....	1	2	3

FIRST FOLD → DOWN

B) How do you rate the quality of the features (how well did the author handle his article)? Circle the number under the appropriate heading.

Title	Excellent	Good	Poor
Interview: Harold W. Ezell .....	1	2	3
Guns Behind the Great Wall .....	1	2	3
Salvador SitRep .....	1	2	3
The Sting That Kills .....	1	2	3
Firing the SA80 .....	1	2	3
Dawn Assault in Dhofar .....	1	2	3
"Snake Eaters" .....	1	2	3
War Zone Bocay .....	1	2	3
Afghan Odyssey .....	1	2	3
Angolan Firefight .....	1	2	3
Paracaidista! .....	1	2	3
Danner's Fort Lewis Boot .....	1	2	3
Junk or Jewels .....	1	2	3

SECOND FOLD → UP

3. If you were going to assign a writer to do an article on rifles, what would you have him write about? \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you were going to assign a writer to do an article on pistols, what would you have him write about? \_\_\_\_\_

5. If you were going to assign a writer to do an article on terrorism, what would you have him write about? \_\_\_\_\_

6. If you were going to assign a writer to do a combat report, what would you have him cover? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you want to read articles about SOF staff projects:

- \_\_\_ Training Teams
- \_\_\_ Parachute Jumps
- \_\_\_ Freedom Fighter Assistance

Place an X in the space provided next to those subjects you want to read about.

8. Do you think any of the major articles in this issue are too long? \_\_\_\_\_

9. A) Was this issue Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Average \_\_\_\_\_ or Poor \_\_\_\_\_.

- B) Why? \_\_\_\_\_

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE



10. What would you do to improve SOF? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*This is a confidential survey — your name is not required. Opinions expressed will provide *Soldier of Fortune* editors with an insight as to what our readers are most interested in.

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"Fat chance," I thought as I read these claims in the Danner boot catalog. The only truly waterproof boots I've ever worn are rubberized, caulked hip boots. And as for break-in time, experience has taught me that sore, blistered feet are the price you pay for new boots — no matter how well-made.

Armed with these time-honored articles of faith, I set out to explode what I thought was just more ad hype. Upon receiving my pair of Danner Shoe Company's "finest service boot" — the Fort Lewis — a 10-inch high, Vibram-soled black leather boot designed for military personnel, I headed straight for the craggy foothills of the Rocky Mountains for a live-fire field test.

It was a perfect day to destroy a pair of boots. A wet spring snow had blanketed the mountains the night before, and a heavy, blinding sleet was now keeping everything but the sand trucks indoors. I drove to the trailhead on Green Mountain, put on my Fort Lewis boots straight out of the box and took off at a slow jog through the slushy white muck.

After just a few minutes of plowing up slope, I was struck by these boots' light weight. Though they look heavy, each boot weighs in at less than two pounds — almost half the weight of traditional leather hiking boots. Since Army tests have shown that one pound on your foot equals five extra pounds in your pack, any savings in this area considerably reduces fatigue over the long haul.

Also, the Vibram Kletterlift soles, which have a continuous lug pattern through the heel juncture, provided excellent traction on the snow-covered rock, mud, and prairie grass terrain. Trimmed very close to the welt, these soles tend not to catch on pant legs or on each other, which permits a natural running stride and kept me from falling flat on my face while thrashing through the varied terrain.

Near the summit, I did some non-technical rock climbing on an exposed wall to test the rigidity of the soles and overall fit of the boot. Lateral stability was excellent as I edged precipitously on minor irregularities in the rock face. After about 25 yards of vertical ascent, foot fatigue was minimal, which again attests to a rigid sole and a good-fitting boot.

With no more interest or energy for further trailblazing, I made my descent by following a rocky creek bed which the spring runoff had filled to about 4 to 6 inches depth. If the mud and slush couldn't soak my feet, surely this two-hour immersion session in an icy stream would. But when I stumbled back to the car and pulled off both boots, I couldn't believe it. My feet were dry! Not even slightly damp, but *bone dry*.

These boots aren't only waterproof. They breathe as well, which maximizes foot comfort. Danner achieves these ideal qualities by permanently fitting its boots with a one-piece Gore-Tex sock that completely wraps around feet and ankles. Gore-Tex is im-

# DANNER BOOTS

T & E

by Tom Bates



SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown wearing Danner boots on recent venture into Surinam. Photo: Patrick Chauvel



Danner Fort Lewis boot, with 10-inch-high, full-grain leather uppers and Vibram Kletterlift lug sole, is guaranteed waterproof.

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penetrable to water in its liquid state but allows water vapor to pass through. The result is that, while water may seep through seams and abrasions in the boots' leather uppers, it never gets past the Gore-Tex barrier surrounding your feet. Though leather conditioning is advisable for boot maintenance, you no longer have to bother with mink oil or other greasy goo to keep your Danners waterproof — the integral Gore-Tex sock provides a lasting water seal. However, this does not mean that your feet will drown in their own perspiration. As you walk, water vapor is actually pumped away from your foot out through the Gore-Tex sock and then through the uncoated leather uppers. Additionally, the abrasion-resistant Cambrelle nylon lining wicks perspiration away from your feet to keep them dry even in hot weather.

Impressed, but still not ready to throw in the towel, I put the Danners back on, drove to our editorial offices and jogged the venerable "fat four" — a 4-mile running circuit on the streets around our offices. Despite an arduous hike in the mountains and this shin-pounding jog on hard pavement, my feet were not only blister-free, they weren't even sore. The full lining and padded arched insoles provided ample comfort and support while the cushioned midsoles absorbed substantial amounts of shock. These boots felt like they were custom-made. And despite the 10-inch-high uppers, my Achilles tendons never suffered — a common problem with most high-topped boots, especially when new.

*Soldier of Fortunes*'s own Editor/Pub-

*Continued on page 101*

# JUNK OR

**S**IGNED into law by President Reagan on 30 October 1984, an amendment to the Gun Control Act of 1968, authored by Senator Robert Dole, has opened the floodgates to the importation of military small arms manufactured between 1899 and 1945 (see "Back by Popular Demand," SOF, April '86). It took the BATF six months to develop the import regulations. Within 14 months after passage of the amendment, weapons started to reach stateside docks in large quantity. Warehouses now are choked with thousands of imported military firearms, some of great merit and not a few downright dangerous. Let's examine both the junk and the jewels.

Spanish-made Mauser rifles have a well-deserved reputation for marginal strength and safety. As a consequence of the Dole Amendment, you can purchase a Spanish Mauser Model 1916 chambered for the 7.62x51mm cartridge for \$69.95. What you are not told is that this rifle was converted at Spanish arsenals to fire the 7.62x51mm CETME cartridge. While it has the 7.62x51mm NATO chamber profile, the Spanish round features a lighter bullet at lower velocity and chamber pressure than the NATO cartridge. Recently, a substantial portion of 40 million rounds of Indian-manufactured 7.62x51mm NATO ammunition was dumped on the U.S. market. Manufactured in 1978, this ammo (head-stamped "OFV 78 7.62 M80") was surplus because poor quality control resulted in excessive pressures. Stuff this crap into a Spanish M1916 and you have all the ingredients for a major disaster.

Another recipe for catastrophe is the Italian Carcano M38 carbine rechambered from 6.5mm to the powerful 7.92mm German Mauser cartridge and available for \$59.95. The bolt sleeve on this rifle not only holds the firing mechanism in the bolt but, by means of a small, single lug, also acts as a safety device. This lug slides in a groove and notch cut into the rear of the bolt body. Should the higher pressures generated by the 7.92mm cartridge shear this lug off the bolt sleeve, the firing pin assembly would fly rearward like an uncontrolled piston to embed itself between the shooter's eyeballs.

The entire series of French Lebel and Berthier rifles are highly suspect as well. Never concerned much with safety, the French failed to provide safety mechanisms on some of these weapons. Others require the trigger to be pulled while the safety is engaged. Almost all can be discharged by dropping them on the butt.

All of the Mauser Broomhandle pistols imported from the PRC belong on the scrap pile. These pitted, rusted hulks, complete with sewer-pipe bores, have been fitted in most instances with poorly made replacement parts at Chinese arsenals. Sleeving the barrel, welding the pits and refinishing by U.S. importers will not salvage these pistols



## Dole Amendment Imports Flood Firearms Market

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

and add not one whit to their value. Remember, until the advent of the .357 Magnum, the .30 (7.63mm) Mauser cartridge was the hottest number in town, racing down the barrel at 1,410 fps. Firing one of these tired Model 1896 pistols may leave you with the barrel, barrel extension and hammer mechanism protruding from your forehead.

Other losers include semiautomatic FN 49 rifles proudly bearing the Royal Egyptian crest on their receivers. These babies are chambered for the 7.92mm cartridge and you had better locate a warehouse full of parts if you intend to shoot one. Most are

older models with one-piece firing pins. You can expect this component to break with annoying regularity and also to induce slam-fires. You had better have a grocery bag full of extractors also.

Is there anything worth acquiring from the inventory of small arms stacked in the burgeoning barns of Dole Amendment importers? Yes, indeed. Quite a bit, as a matter of fact. With a little bit of discernment, we can emerge from the buckets of cosmoline with some real gems.

Bill Rodgers has been collecting and selling military small arms for 35 years. During

# JEWELS



**ABOVE LEFT:** Junk? Part of a mountain of 100,000 military rifles scrapped by Springfield Sporters for failure to meet its standards of safety or condition.

**ABOVE:** Jewels? Glistening with cosmoline, a portion of the more than 10,000 .410-gauge Enfield Muskets awaiting delivery to collectors.

this time, he has established himself as a leading authority on Mauser and other military turnbolts. Rodgers founded Springfield Sporters, Inc. (Dept. SOF, R.D. #1, Penn Run, PA 15765; phone 412-254-2626) 27 years ago, and he has never knowingly sold a firearm he considered potentially defective or dangerous. A mountain of 100,000 purposely destroyed rifles on his property attests to that. His warehouses are an excellent starting point in our quest to uncover some of the exceptionally fine pieces brought into this country under the Dole

Amendment.

For example, Springfield Sporters has cornered the market on a most unusual conversion to .410 gauge of the British .303 SMLE rifle. Peculiar to India, the conversions to single-shot smoothbore were made at the Ishopore arsenal between 1927 and 1950. Designed for riot control by police and home guard units, these weapons were often used by British officers for bird shooting. They were also sometimes issued for protection to native beaters on tiger hunts. Approximately 10,500 rifles were so converted. The British .410-gauge cartridge consists of an unnecked and unsized .303-caliber brass case. Collectors will want these weapons as is, but those who wish to shoot burglars can have their .410-gauge Enfield Muskets rechambered to 3-inch Magnum at no extra charge. Condition varies from excellent to unfired. The standard grade is priced at \$74.95 and super select at \$89.95.

Also on hand are a group of .303 Enfield No.1 MkIII\*, No.4 MkI and P14 rifles in excellent condition. Springfield Sporters and other importers have uncovered a fairly wide array of firearms in equally fine condition. Best buys include German P-38s; Canadian, Inglis-manufactured Browning High Powers (Chinese contract); U.S. M1911A1 pistols; Swedish Mausers; PRC SKSs; Israeli K98s rebarreled to 7.62x51mm NATO; and various Belgian- and German-contract Mausers.

A few items previously quite rare or totally unknown have also surfaced. Some of these more esoteric rifles are the Egyptian Hakim; Swedish AG42B Ljungman; Turkish Forestry Model of the 07/15 Lebel carbine; Venezuelan target-rifle version of the FN Mauser 98 (caliber 7x57mm, used in the 1956 Olympics); French MAS 36/51 (the 7.5mm Model 1936 with a grenade launcher built into the end of the barrel); and the French MAS 44 (predecessor to the MAS 1949 and 49/56 rifles).

Expect to see few U.S.-manufactured military small arms, as those given to other nations under Lend Lease or other assistance programs cannot be imported. However, 12,000 .30 M1 carbines and 41,000 M1 Garands were recently imported from Korea. Since the Korean government apparently falsified the export documents, the BATF on 14 January 1987 recalled all permits covering the importation of U.S.-manufactured military firearms, ammunition and component parts thereof furnished to foreign governments under sales or assistance programs.

Previous restrictions against the importation of machine guns were not affected by the Dole Amendment. A few semiautomatic firearms manufactured after 1945 are exempt from import restrictions because they were already on the BATF's curios and relics list. Imports of weapons manufactured by officially blacklisted nations, such as ComBloc countries (with the exception of Yugoslavia and the PRC), are still banned. Weapons produced before a nation became blacklisted can be imported if the items were stored in a non-proscribed country for at least five years prior to importation. Firearms issued to civilian police units are also exempt from prohibition.

To date, the overall quality of Dole Amendment firearms is superior to those imported prior to 1968. Apparently, and quite logically, the lower-grade material was disposed of first. Although the highest collector-grade weapons have not been affected, the general effect has been to lower prices on both firearms and ammunition. Younger collectors with limited budgets have been attracted and this expanded base of interest in firearms will eventually benefit the entire firearms industry.

Collectors are best advised to seek pieces in excellent or better condition. Shooters should stick with British Enfields and Mausers manufactured in Germany, Belgium or Sweden, avoiding Spanish, Italian and French trash. ❌



## FULL AUTO

Continued from page 20

sion, and a skeletonized, hinged buttplate. To open or fold the stock, depress the knurled release button on the left side of the frame, just above the pistol grip. The stock folds downward and rests against the underside of the grip frame. So enamored with this folding stock were the Soviets that they copied it almost exactly on the Kalashnikov.

The trigger mechanism is quite simple. When the trigger is pulled, it drives a 4.5-inch sheet-metal bar forward. This, in turn, causes the sear, attached to the front end of the trigger bar, to rotate downward on its axis pin, out of engagement with the bolt's bent. There is no provision for semiautomatic fire. This presents no problem, as the cyclic rate is only 550 rpm and experienced operators can easily fire single shots. When the trigger is released, its compressed spring drives it forward, pulling the trigger bar backward to pivot the sear upward to catch the bolt.

MP 38/40 magazines have a 32-round capacity, and are of the single-position-feed, staggered-column, box type. They are the weakest link in this system. Most stoppages associated with this weapon are a consequence of its magazines. They must be kept clean and lightly oiled. Of sheet-metal construction, they can be easily disassembled for maintenance. There is a single indicator hole, marked "32." All are marked "M.P.38u.40" and to be genuine must carry *Waffenamt Stempel* (ordnance inspection stamps), factory codes and dates as well. Though difficult to charge, an effective loader was designed and issued.

All of this weighs in at 8 pounds, 14 ounces, empty (heavier than a Sten but lighter than the PPSH41). With the stock extended the length is 32.8 inches. When the stock is folded the overall length is reduced to 24.8 inches.

MP 38/40 slings are similar to the leather 98k sling. Other accessories included both leather (early issue) and web magazine pouches and a winter trigger which also followed the 98k pattern.

Disassembly procedures are somewhat unorthodox but easily accomplished. Remove the magazine and clear the weapon. Move the bolt forward, under control. Pull out the spring-loaded, knurled knob at the front end of the handguard and twist it a quarter turn in either direction. Hold back on the trigger; grasp the magazine-well and rotate the upper receiver 90 degrees to the left. Separate the upper and lower groups. Pull the retracting handle and remove the bolt and telescoping buffer/recoil spring from the rear of the receiver tube. Pry

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the rear end of the extractor upward to remove this component. While the barrel, forearm and grip panels can be removed, this is not necessary for normal cleaning. Reassemble in the reverse order, making sure you pull back on the trigger when the upper and lower groups are joined together.

Most of the MP 40's components carry serial numbers, *Waffenamt Stempel* and manufacturers' codes. An explanation of these latter markings is in order. All manufacturers supplying military equipment to the *Wehrmacht* were assigned secret identification codes. Originally numerical, they were eventually changed to letter codes. MP 40s were assembled by two principal contractors, Erma of Erfurt, Germany, and Steyr Daimler Puch, A.G. of Steyr, Austria. Their codes and the date of manufacture will be found on the top of the receiver's end cap. Early Erma codes were "122" and "27" (apparently two different Erma plants). In 1941, Erma's code was changed to "ayf." In that year Steyr's code was changed from "660" to "bnz." It is reported that Haenel (code "fxo") also assembled complete MP 40s, but that has not been substantiated.

Subcontractors were used to a significant extent in the fabrication of the MP 38/40 series. Other codes encountered on MP 40 components and magazines include "cnd" (National Krupp Registrier Kassen G.m.b.H., Berlin), "cos" (Merz-Werke, Gebr. Merz, Frankfurt), "ghn" (Carl Ullrich & Co., Metallwarenfabrik, Oberschönau/Thür.), "gqm" (Loch & Hartenberger, Metallwarenfabrik, Jdar-Oberstein), "kur" (Steyr Daimler Puch, A.G., Werk Graz), and "98E" (unknown). There were many others.

Two unusual variants of the MP 38/40 were eventually produced in limited quantities. In an effort to duplicate the firepower of the PPSH41's 71-round drum, a model incorporating a double magazine holder was designed. Designated the MP 40/II, the standard magazine-well was replaced with a cowl that held two magazines. When the first magazine was expended, it was necessary to retract the bolt before switching to the other magazine. In combat, it proved no quicker than changing magazines in the usual manner.

Never adopted by the *Wehrmacht*, the MP 41 was designed by Hugo Schmeisser and produced at the Haenel factory. It featured the receiver of the MP 40 with a wooden stock and cross-bolt selector. A spring-loaded catch retained the receiver's end cap and the barrel bar was omitted as the barrel was not readily removable.

In comparison with its contemporaries, the MP 40 was a successful design. The production techniques employed

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in its manufacture were revolutionary. Its handling characteristics were superior to most of its rivals. The cyclic rate was, and still is, correct. Possessing excellent accuracy, hit probability was high at 100 meters and less. Reliability was no worse, or better, than the Sten, PPSH41, or M3. It is still encountered, upon occasion, throughout the world. I once carried a rusted "bnz 42" in El Salvador.

This gun has the proper mystique. Once available in the early 1960s as dewats (deactivated war trophies) for \$39.95, an MP 40 with all matching serial numbers, mint bore and 95-percent original finish will fetch \$2,500 and up today.

Now priced beyond the means of most collectors, there is, fortunately, an excellent alternative. Collectors Corner (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 687, Chardon, OH 44024; phone 216-285-3481) has MP 40s fabricated from parts kits with newly made receiver tubes, all completely refinished, for \$1,200. Carefully assembled and test fired, these fine shooters will satisfy all but the most advanced collectors. If you have a receiver, you can purchase a complete parts kit for only \$450. ❧

## I WAS THERE

*Continued from page 14*

fired from my gun. As a result, we had a positive ID.

Had I been using the more powerful Super Vels, the damage to the truck and driver would probably have been greater. The increased power would have either destroyed the bullet for ballistics test purposes or it would not have been recovered. The military ball ammo, in this rare case, turned out to be the better choice.

What hurt most about this entire incident occurred months later at the circuit court level. The driver was charged with assault with intent to do great bodily harm, felonious assault and malicious destruction of property over \$100. Those three charges carried a maximum of 15 years in prison. The passenger was charged with felonious assault, which carried a maximum of four years in prison. Because of state laws in Michigan and records indicating this was a first offense, they were each sentenced to only two years probation.

*James L. Speicher has over 18 years*

*of service with the U.S. Army (both active and reserve). He was also a police officer in Michigan from 1974 to 1983. When this incident occurred he was a deputy sheriff with the Oakland County Sheriff's Department in Pontiac, Michigan. ❧*

## BATTLE BLADES

*Continued from page 22*

A good Bowie knife should have a blade at least 9 inches long, and 9½ inches is even better. This causes many people today to shy away from carrying and using a Bowie, because they assume it is a big, heavy, clumsy knife. Some are, but the ones that are made correctly, the really good ones, are well-balanced and powerful — and quick in the hand. Don't be misled. There are those who will tell you that a savvy knife fighter with a fast blade of 5 to 7 inches will defeat a man with a big knife, and this is very true. A skilled man with only a pocket knife can indeed kill an inept or untrained man who has a Bowie. But if skill levels are equal, a man armed with a good Bowie knife is going to beat a man who has a

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smaller blade, if for no other reason than the advantage of reach. A good Bowie is most definitely *not* a slow, clumsy knife, and if the handle and sheath are properly executed, a person can easily and comfortably carry a 9- or 9½-inch Bowie.

Blade length gives leverage as well as reach, and leverage is one of the things that enables a handheld cutting tool to make heavy cuts. Taking out sentries with a knife is not on my list of recommended activities, but if it befalls your lot to do so, you had better have a knife that will make a heavy cut. In the forest, building shelter with a minimum of equipment and expenditure of energy requires a knife that will make heavy cuts.

A good Bowie knife will get the job done when big cuts are in order — and it will make the little cuts, too. I know, because I skinned a mouse with mine once just to see if I could. The knife worked just fine. ✂

## COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

*Continued from page 29*

tions at the objective. Even if your only information comes from a map recon,

you can still tentatively position your force for the attack. For example, the fire support team may be located on high ground on the target's flank, with the assault team attacking from a heavily wooded area and the security element protecting the rear.

Again emphasize each man's task — where the demolitions team will be located in the assault line, particular targets for the support gunners, positions and areas of responsibility of each man while the explosives are being placed — so there will be no confusion. Plans may change after close-in recon of the target, but the basic foundation for the attack will have already been laid.

The **administration and logistics** paragraph covers the beans and bullets of the operation. I can think of nothing more frustrating than getting to a target and realizing that the blasting caps for the C4 have been left behind. Make sure you detail the types of weapons and ammo to be carried, explosives and pyrotechnics required (including booby-trap materials), rations and water, uniforms and equipment to be worn (and types of camouflage), medical gear and any special equipment required for the mission. Also include instructions for handling any enemy or civilian prisoners taken — where they will be positioned in the

formation, how they will be secured (cuffs, rope, gags, blindfolds), and how they'll be treated if wounded.

The **command and signal** paragraph is straightforward. Designate the chain of command in the event you and your assistant team leader are knocked off (it happens) so the mission will still have some chance of success. Organize radios and spare batteries, frequencies, call signs and codewords, and all of the signals — hand and arm, whistle, pyrotechnic — that will be used throughout the mission. An easily remembered challenge and password are also a definite must for all operations.

Now that you've given your well-prepared ops order, your team is ready to move out, right? Wrong.

It's easy enough to explain a task, but much harder to effectively carry it out. Rehearsals of every aspect of the operation, from obstacle crossing to actions at the target, will help ensure success. Have the prisoner guard practice tying someone's hands with a rope and gagging them so there's no fumbling around under fire. Get the demo team to set up their explosives and wire and, if practical, blow a simulated target. Make sure your compassmen can reset compass bearings in the dark. Build an expedient field stretcher. Practice obstacle crossing. It's the small

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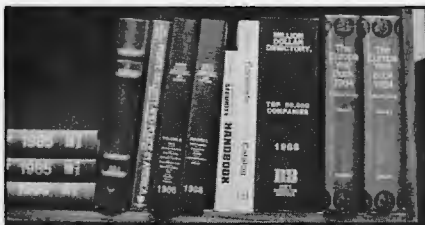
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things that will kill you — or keep you alive.

Finally, inspect and question each man on the team. Ask for a readback from memory of the mission, compass bearings, locations of rendezvous points and other critical mission data. Check that the appropriate equipment has been packed and is properly secured so that nothing "shakes, rattles or rolls," which could compromise noise security.

There will always be the unknown factor at work in war, something that even the most careful planner can't foresee. Nothing can be done in advance to handle the unknown, but a well-prepared ops order can anticipate and overcome just about everything else. ✕

## IN REVIEW

*Continued from page 24*

and collectors can trace not only the chronological development of this unique weapons system, but also the development of the theories, attitudes and politics behind this visionary German innovation, an innovation that has since been universally adopted.

This book covers the MP 43 and MP 44 series, the VG-1 and the FG 42, as well as the development of the

7.92mm Kurz "intermediate-sized" cartridge. An added bonus is the section on accessories and accouterments, such as rifle grenade adaptors, telescopic sights and the famous curved barrel.

Senich's book is a reference work no military arms collector will want to be without. ✕

## EZELL

*Continued from page 31*

particular right here in that 16-mile stretch of border between Tijuana and San Diego County.

**SOF: Why is that?**

**EZELL:** Tremendous numbers are coming. The bad guys [the border bandits] know these poor, defenseless, illegal aliens — who shouldn't even be here, who have brought everything they have with them — are easy prey for them.

Our agency is the only agency in the world in border control enforcement that protects illegal aliens from other illegal aliens. We're protecting them from being raped, robbed, murdered and whatever, from their fellow countrymen who have migrated here themselves to take advantage of these people.

We need help from Mexico [on their side of the border] ... on the crime, the violence. ... We're not asking them to

stop all illegal immigration. We're asking them to at least assist us in trying to control the violence against aliens by Mexican nationals, the violence against our agents.

It's a war zone down there [in the San Diego border area]. It's not getting better, it's getting worse.

I believe Mexico has a responsibility to us, as our military, to do something about it.

**SOF: Haven't INS and Border Patrol officials made official requests to different authorities south of the border in past years?**

**EZELL:** Yes, we have, and we have not received a response. Our chief here in San Diego [Border Patrol Chief Alan E. Eliason] has written and asked for — and I have met with both lieutenant governors of Baja North and South and asked for — meetings to discuss those very issues, about border violence, about other-than-Mexican transients transiting their country, asking them for assistance. And I have yet to hear from them.

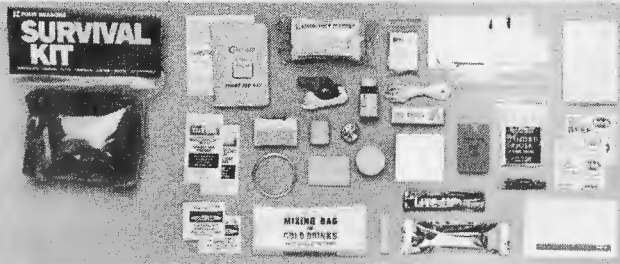
**SOF: What sparks this drive in you to champion this cause as ardently as you do?**

**EZELL:** I'm scared.

**SOF: Scared?**

**EZELL:** I'm personally scared about America's future unless we do something about the borders being out of control. I am concerned, I am afraid of the consequences of doing nothing. The status quo ain't going to cut it. We've got to become aggressive as a nation to regain control of our borders.

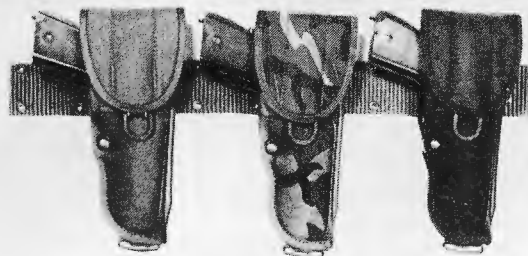
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This interview was conducted before the Immigration Reform Act was passed. Asked recently what effect he thinks the new law will have, Mr. Ezell said, "I feel the new act gives the INS the tools to better control the border, but it won't succeed unless businesses voluntarily comply. We believe 95 percent of the American employers are law-abiding citizens who will follow the new laws. But the INS doesn't have the manpower to monitor all businesses." ✕

## AFGHAN ODYSSEY

Continued from page 73

commander, greets us with hot tea and bread. We started walking at 1530; now it is one hour past midnight. I sleep the sleep of the dead.

At daybreak I wake again to the sounds of war. The Russians are bombing Dubandy, the guerrilla stronghold nine kilometers away. When I go outside with the commander my jaw drops in amazement — we're right next to Russian-controlled Pol-i-Alam!

The whole landscape is completely flat. The mountain range forms a girdle far in the distance around this immense plateau, and I clearly see huge helicopters rise up from Pol-i-Alam and head toward Dubandy in the hills. The air is filled with their vibration, and they stay a little over 500 meters up in the air, where RPG-7 rockets can't reach them. I count 14 helicopters in the sky at one moment. They return to Pol-i-Alam, firing big red flares from their tails before descending. They pick up a fresh load of Russian commandos and Afghan government troops, and off they go again.

"Have you used SAM-7 rockets?" I ask the commander.

"Yes, but they are worthless. We need Stingers."

We are joined by Mudjir, formerly the director of a department in a ministry. He has been tortured in prison. He now assists the commander, and he speaks good English.

Mudjir tells me that this is the first big offensive against Dubandy this year; last year there were two. Also, Surhab is being bombed. Tomorrow we'll know about Chambul. We go in for breakfast, tea and bread. No rice here.

Today, all is quiet on the Dubandy front, but Surhab is still being bombed. Helicopters returning from there fly right over our courtyard, but a more sinister group is circling an area only half a kilometer away from us on the Dubandy side. We're sitting hunched up against the outside wall of the courtyard, and I'm beginning to wonder if it isn't high time to run for cover.

"Don't worry," Mudjir says. "They won't come here. We are too many."

"But why are they circling?"



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"They have a purpose."

The commander and some of his men show me the countryside. People are working in the fields, and everywhere we go we are invited in for tea.

Lunch here consists of bread, fatty broth, cucumbers and onions. In my four days here I was offered eggs twice. Once upon a time people were well-fed here, the diet was varied and good. I can see that from the farming country still being cultivated. Not everything has been destroyed, not all fields lie abandoned. Some of the houses still standing are fine, impressive structures with meter-thick walls, clean carpets, carved doors, cupboards and sparkling tea glasses filled with undiluted tea.

The enemy is selective, punishing those caught in "anti-government" activity. I am shown a blackened wheat field; last week government soldiers burned it but left the other fields unscathed. When the dragnet is put out for guerrillas, they disappear, warned by informers in the government or working for the Russians.

We cross the road connecting Pol-i-Alam with Kabul, and behind some trees and bushes I am shown a Russian armed vehicle graveyard. The Russians now clear the roadside of shot-up vehicles so that foreign dignitaries and journalists traveling along the road as guests of the regime won't see them.

I am taken to a destroyed house where a fight took place 13 days ago between the

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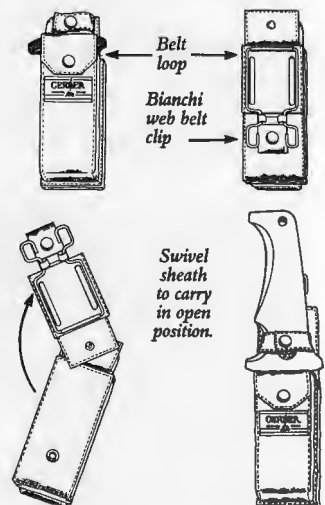
Knife shown half size.

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commander's men and Vietnamese and Indian troops. One Vietnamese and two Indians — and one guerrilla — were killed. At the bottom of a dry well lies the body of an Asian, knees drawn up to the chin. But is it a Vietnamese soldier? Mongols also serve in the Soviet army.

In the evening, while we are the guests of an old and proud farmer, Sofi comes around with a grin on his face. He tells me that just after we went through the pass between the low hills, Russian tanks closed it and surrounded Zarunshar. The three mujahideen who stayed in the pass barely escaped with their skins intact. Early in the morning the tanks shelled Chambul, and Zarunshar was combed for guerrillas.

Today, I'm being taken to see a tank convoy. We have to be careful because the Russians have guards along the road and guards with dogs in every ruined house along the way. Through the scrub I can actually see one guard poking about the ruins of the former government post we passed the day before.

The tanks arrive precisely when the commander said they would, and I can't believe my eyes! When the mujahideen say hundreds of tanks, there really are hundreds of tanks. Only by "tanks" they also mean trucks, armed personnel carriers, artillery, jeeps, etc. I sit hunched on my heels for what must be an hour and the column keeps roaring by. The distance is only 350 meters, and with binoculars I can clearly see not only Afghan government troops but also Soviet soldiers with their floppy desert hats, like pancakes, poor imitations of the "digger" hats still worn by the Australian army.

Are there men of my people among them? Perhaps my nephews, old enough now for military service?

The war winds down, the clouds leave, the sun warms the lazy days up to 35 degrees, and time stands still. Even the oxen pulling the wooden plough seem slower than usual. *Yeet*, the Moslem Christmas, has come and I have nothing to do. People clean their houses, dress up in their Friday best and visit friends and relatives. The commander distributes money to the war widows.

During this time I spend many hours talking about Sweden, America, the Soviet Union and the war. Mudjir tells me that religion is the source of the mujahideen's strength, but I don't think it is the whole answer. You also have a people's cultural and historical traditions; the Afghans are a warrior nation, never before cowed by a foreign invader. They have made a terrible decision — either to drive the Russians out or die to the last Afghan. But it seems the world couldn't care less.

I love the children here. Hard work, undernourishment, the war have not smothered their inborn childish delight and inquisitiveness. Some would call the Afghans simple and naive, too straightforward and friendly, too generous in the midst

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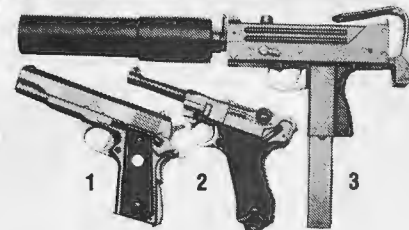
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long way off, and we get up and continue to walk, cool as cucumbers.

Another bang — the same procedure — and another. After the fourth shell whistles over our heads, my counting stops at three between the bang and the explosion. I see long, perpendicular columns of smoke rising less than a kilometer in front of us on the road. I look around for Anargul; he has already found a safe spot in a ditch and invites me to join him. The shells keep flying, perhaps eight more, then there is total silence. We go on.

Again I get that weird feeling in my stomach I felt on the first day, crossing the exposed dry riverbed. This, after all, is war — and in war anything can happen.

Around a bend, we meet up with Asadulah and the man carrying my bag waiting for us. He shows gravel in the skin of his hands; he barely ducked into a trench in time when the shells came down. They were being fired at the horses that had passed us returning to Pakistan.

The last thousand meters now. Caravans of loaded horses, the moon big and white, a dog barking in the distance and my feet are killing me. But I can't help worrying about those bombs and the Russian air force. The Soviet leader, Gorbachev, is on the move and wants Afghanistan out of the way.

Can such a country, in this day and age, really be conquered by Soviet armed power? ✕

## STINGER

*Continued from page 45*

shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missile was the only answer.

In 1982, Egyptian- and Chinese-made SAM-7 heat-seeking missiles were brought to Afghanistan to meet this need. However, their performance has been far from satisfactory. Even the under-equipped mujahideen consider the SAM-7 obsolete.

"It's old technology," says Abdul Haq, 28, a resistance commander of Khalis' faction in the Kabul area. "SAM-7s are deflected by the sun, moon, clouds, snow, even mountains and rivers. And since the Soviet aircraft started dropping deflector flares, SAM-7s have become useless."

In addition to being easily fooled, the SAM-7 is also a liability to its operator — it leaves a billowing trail of white smoke after being fired, telegraphing the operator's location.

British-made, man-portable Blowpipes have been employed as well, but for some reason these have also proven ineffective. Although Blowpipes were deployed in defense of the Zhawar base last April, resistance sources insist that the seven helicopters shot down during the battle were victims of 14.5mm machine guns. Western analysts believe that Blowpipes are too complicated to be used effectively by the mujahideen because they haven't received the necessary sophisticated training.

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It wasn't until September 1986 that U.S.-made Stingers finally made their way to the mujahideen. According to Western diplomats in Pakistan, delivery of the 150 missiles was delayed for several months by the Pakistani government in response to Soviet threats against Pakistan should the missiles find their way to the Afghan resistance groups.

Despite these threats, when the missiles arrived in Pakistan, a few selected mujahideen commanders were trained to use the Stingers in a camp near Islamabad, reportedly under the supervision of U.S. military personnel. Nangarhar Province has apparently been chosen as a testing area. Deploying the Stingers in this province is a bold gesture of defiance against the Soviets who, along with the Afghan government, have continually sought control of this strategic region near the Khyber Pass and Pakistan border.

Curiously, not all the mujahideen groups have been issued the new missiles. Gailani's *Mahaz-i-Milli Islami* (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan), considered the most pro-Western resistance group, and the once powerful *Harakat-i-Enqilab-i-Islami* (Islamic Revolutionary Movement) have not received the missiles, while the majority have gone to resistance groups led by Hekmatyar and Khalis.

The Stingers were first deployed on 30 September 1986, with great success, by *Hezb-i-Islami* near Jalalabad. In a brief bat-

tle, the mujahideen downed four Soviet helicopters. Aside from seeing the obvious and immediate military benefits of this new weapon, the mujahideen gained a tremendous psychological boost as well. Having a powerful ally send such state-of-the-art weapons illustrates to the mujahideen a strong U.S. commitment to their cause. This, in turn, has had far-reaching positive effects on fighting morale.

This military success at Jalalabad was also witnessed by many Afghan noncombatants. News of the Stinger's deployment and its effectiveness spread quickly among the peasant population. Miles away from the scene, I heard villagers chatting around the fire in their homes about the new "magical" weapons. "Stinger" has found a permanent place in the Afghan vernacular and is well on its way to becoming the most popular English word in Afghanistan.

To villagers, the Stingers mean more than just increased firepower for their brothers in the resistance. Soviet aerial bombardment is often used as a reprisal measure against civilians in the vicinity of mujahideen operations. Fearing reprisals, these villagers often asked the resistance commanders not to undertake offensive operations near their villages. Thus, the Soviets achieved a sort of neutralization of those areas while denying logistical support for mujahideen. The continued success of the Stingers may allow the mujahideen to operate in an area since they can now provide some measure

of protection for the highly vulnerable villages.

A recent progress report from the State Department on the newly deployed Stingers states that last December the mujahideen were averaging one downed Soviet aircraft per day. A similar report by the Heritage Foundation verifies a success rate of approximately 70 percent for the Stingers.

The Soviets' reaction to this has been dramatic. They launched a full-scale winter offensive against two big resistance bases, Murey and Shelman, close to the Khyber Pass. Heliborne Red Army paratroops spearheaded Soviet/DRA attacks, with massive air support. Aircraft intruded into Pakistani airspace, bombing areas on both sides of the boundary. Stingers were not deployed, as Pakistan refused to supply more Stingers to Khalis' Nangarhar commander, Engineer Mahmoud, whom Pakistan blamed for a report by a British journalist which compromised the Stinger program. Shelman fell on 19 November, Murey on 22 November, with 42 mujahideen killed and 71 wounded, eight DShKs and seven 14.5mms knocked out.

When I visited Murey base a few days after the Soviet paratroopers had withdrawn, hundreds of mortar shells and ammunition boxes were scattered in the area, alongside other destroyed material. The result of this battle raises once more the question of the wisdom of the mujahideen keeping big bases with large stocks of

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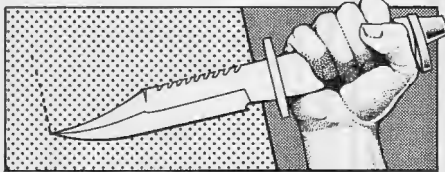
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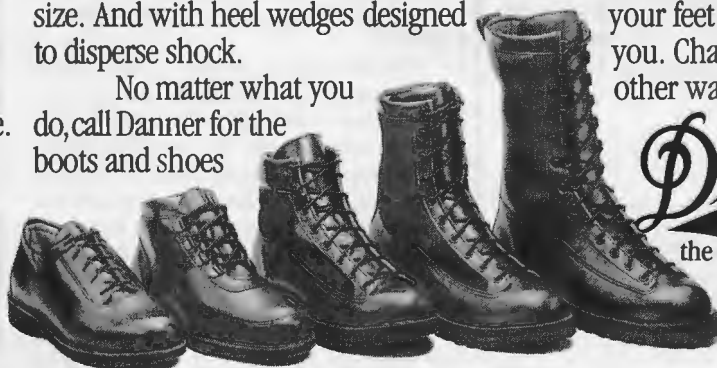
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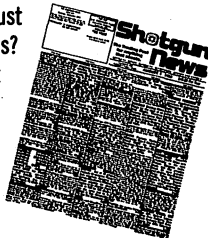
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ammunition which cannot be rapidly moved.

Critics argue that fighting from fixed positions is hampering the resistance, which can't match the firepower of the Soviets. The mujahideen leadership, however, think differently. While I was in Murey, big mule convoys with rockets, mortars and crates of ammunition were coming in from Pakistan. Mujahideen were digging new caves in the mountain slopes to store their supplies.

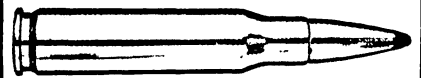
Despite those successes in the late fall, the arrival of the Stingers has significantly limited the Soviets' ability to attack the mujahideen. The Soviets are now flying at treetop level, presumably to avoid being locked on by the Stingers' electronic guidance system. In flying so low, however, the helicopters are now vulnerable to the Afghans' Dashikas and Ziqriats. It was also interesting that aerial activity in general seemed to be limited. During a 23-day trip into Afghanistan, I often heard helicopters at night but only saw them flying in the daytime on three occasions.

Other Western journalists report similar changes in Soviet flight patterns. Jets and helicopters no longer linger over attack areas. Instead, they make quick entries and exits. Fixed-wing aircraft must release bombs from higher altitudes, making their bombing runs less accurate. Soviet planes taking off from Kabul now gain altitude for 35 minutes in a spiraling pattern before finally turning eastward for Jalalabad in order to keep the aircraft over the relatively well-secured area of Kabul before they pass over guerrilla strongholds in the surrounding mountains.

All of these developments are strategic victories for the mujahideen — victories which can be sustained and thus keep Soviet airpower off balance. Soon, the mujahideen may be in a position to threaten aerial resupply and provide antiaircraft protection for offensive operations against Soviet installations.

Stinger missile deployment in Afghanistan has also given Western powers an object lesson in how to combat Soviet aggression throughout the Third World. Because each Stinger costs \$75,000, compared to \$8 million for one Mi-24 Hind-D helicopter, this is an extremely cost-effective means of countering the Soviet air threat. In fact, for every dollar spent in support of the mujahideen, the Soviets spend at least 10 times that amount to maintain pressure on the Afghan resistance, which drains Soviet military coffers.

Whether used to defend villages from indiscriminate air attack, to interdict the flow of Soviet men and materiel, or to provide an air umbrella for offensive operations, properly employed Stingers can do a great deal to even the odds between the freedom fighters and the Soviet invaders. While no one is suggesting that the introduction of Stinger missiles will radically change the face of the war, one thing is clear — the mujahideen can now greatly increase the price the Soviets will have to pay to remain in Afghanistan. ☒



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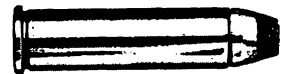
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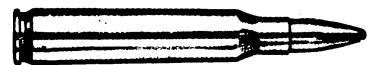


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# BOCAY BATTLE

Continued from page 67

just off the center of the airstrip. The commander knew about the ammunition and was in the process of sending men back for it. I went along to help and saw a group of wounded being brought back. One man was shot in the foot and was walking back to the CP supported by his buddy. I didn't think he should be walking on the wound, so I draped him over my shoulder and carried him back.

At this stage the battle became almost surrealistic. It was dusk and the enemy had the airstrip under direct and indirect fire. The contras were moving captured equipment and wounded back to the CP, ignoring the rounds zinging at their feet and ducking only momentarily during mortar impacts. The strip was at least 60 meters wide and almost a kilometer long, but the contras walked right down the middle of it doing their work as if they were training at Fort Benning.

At the CP the commanders were organizing an orderly withdrawal to a second defensive line on a steep hill overlooking the airstrip. Captured equipment was being brought in and sorted and small-unit commanders were being given instructions. You could hear the Sandinista fire creeping closer and eventually they were firing directly into the camp. There was never any panic. People merely positioned themselves behind trees and continued going about their business.

Seven wounded personnel were being treated by a medic known as Coca-Cola. Gunshot and shrapnel wounds were divided about evenly and the wounded withstood the pain with stoic endurance. One man had a two-inch-deep gash running under his arm, caused by mortar shrapnel. He didn't say a word and waited until all other wounded were treated before he allowed Coca-Cola to look at him.

The final decision to withdraw to the hill was made when the piri were in control of the leading edge of the airstrip and less than 200 meters from the CP.

Night had fallen and the contras began regrouping as piri tracers whizzed through the night air. No one was overly concerned as they all presupposed piri incompetence and withdrew to the hill at a leisurely pace.

By 2000 hours the contras were in position on the hill and the enemy was in control of the airstrip. After a day of almost continuous battle, the night silence was eerie. Both sides seemed in agreement that night was for sleeping, not fighting. All were content to wait until morning before renewing the drive to kill each other.

I strung my hammock between two trees behind the front line. My equipment was brought by mule from the Amaka position when it was evacuated, so I could finally get into some clean, dry clothes. Just before I dozed off, the contras buried one of their dead about 10 feet from my hammock. In his gear they found some letters to his girl-

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friend, written in extremely romantic Latin style. This was the only contra KIA I saw during the battle.

Fighting resumed at 0700 the next morning. The piris hit us hard with mortar fire but they were unable to budge the contras. The hill was extremely steep and the piris received heavy fire as they struggled up it. By late morning the opposing lines were only 100 meters apart and they started yelling insults at each other. Confident in their superior position, the contras' morale was high. Everyone seemed to join in the cat-calls against the piris.

Enemy helicopters continued to attack our resupply trails along the Coco but still refused to attack us directly. As always, the contra hilltop was bare and no positions were dug, so one helicopter pass could have wiped us out. It certainly helps if your enemy is a coward.

During a lull in the fighting, I returned to the CP area to talk with the commanders. When I arrived, everyone was running toward the rear, one of them with my rucksack. I grabbed my ruck as everyone yelled to hurry. I had no idea what was going on until I saw Papillon — one of the toughest contra commanders — stumble and fall. He had been hit by mortar shrapnel in the arm and head. It seems a mortar round had hit the CP and all the commanders were wounded.

I took Papillon's rifle and supported his weight as he tried to walk to where Coca-Cola had set up an aid station. The trail was over steep terrain and he didn't have full use of his right leg, but he's one tough mother. After about a klick he demanded his weapon back and refused to let me help him. And even though he was so dizzy he could barely stand, he refused to ride a mule. He wanted to walk under his own power.

After Papillon was in good hands at the aid station, I walked to another contra command post run by a fellow called Mike Lima, located about 10 klicks up the Coco River. All along the trail, contra reinforcements were moving up. I learned the hill position had been evacuated and a new line of defense set up about 500 meters back. The situation had stabilized.

All in all, the battle was correctly fought by the contras. A guerrilla force should never hold territory to the last man. If a defense is called for, it should be done in depth, dropping back to the next line as soon as the enemy exerts overwhelming force, while exacting the maximum amount of enemy blood. This is what the contras did during the battle. They succeeded in knocking out an Mi-17 and killing its four-man crew. They killed at least two piris in my area (probably more during the entire battle) and lost, according to contra commander Enrique Bermudez, four of their own men.

Both sides tend to make exaggerated claims, but probably 1,500 to 1,600 Sandinistas operated against 360 contras during the battle. Front-line numbers, the men actually launching bullets at each other, were much lower, maybe 100 contras ver-

sus 300 to 400 Sandinistas.

There were, however, some glaring deficiencies in the defense plan. The contras could have exacted a much higher price from the Sandinistas if they had used mines, booby traps and ambushes along the enemy approach routes. (To hell with bureaucratic restrictions against mines. This is war.) They should also have prepared a defense in depth, with three or four dug-in defensive lines. Though these are serious flaws in contra tactics, they are easily solved with training and small-unit leaders with big boots and hard asses.

When I arrived at Mike Lima's CP, he was planning the defense with other local commanders. He wanted to move Redeye teams along the Sandinista air route to shoot down more helicopters, and he was preparing two Redeyes.

Since the military situation was stable, I boarded the contra Hughes 500 helicopter with the FDN G-2 and a two-man film crew who had been on the airstrip during the first day of battle. We went to FDN tactical HQ. I debriefed the FDN intel section and talked with FDN commander Enrique Bermudez (see the accompanying "An Interview With 380"). He told me the contras had just destroyed a Sandinista POL depot at Rama port in southern Nicaragua and were moving troops to hit such targets throughout the country. He was definitely not on the defensive.

From my experiences with the contras, I could see this was a fight of simple country people against oppression. It was clear these people were in the fight for the long haul, come what may, and this war will continue until their country is free. A noble cause and one that oppressed people everywhere can understand. ✕

## DANNER BOOTS

Continued from page 83

lisher Robert K. Brown seconded my rave reviews about Danner boots upon his return from a recent adventure in Surinam. Most of his trip was spent in leaky pirogues negotiating that country's maze of jungle river channels, or portaging across jagged volcanic rock. Though his feet were submersed eight to ten hours a day in the water-logged pirogues, they stayed dry the entire trip. Traction and support were excellent when portaging, and his feet never got sore. In fact, Brown even wore them for his daily 2-mile jog around the insurgents' airstrip.

"These boots fit me great from day one," exclaimed Brown. "Even in the stifling hot, humid jungle, my feet stayed cool, comfortable and completely dry."

"OK," I grudgingly admitted to myself, "so these boots are waterproof and fit like a glove even when new. But will they last?"

To answer this, I took my Fort Lewises to a local boot maker to see what he'd say

Continued on page 112

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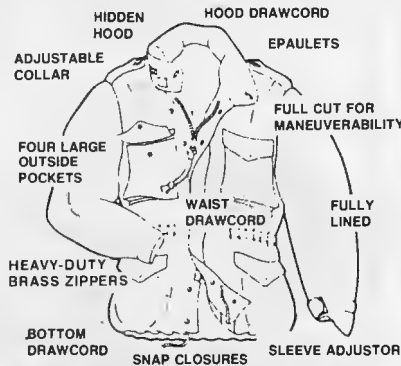
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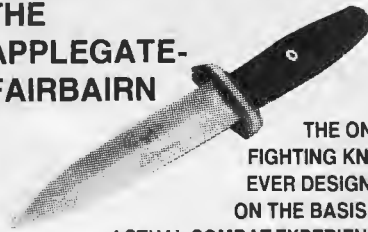
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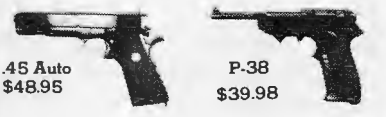
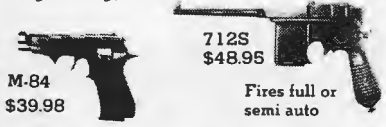
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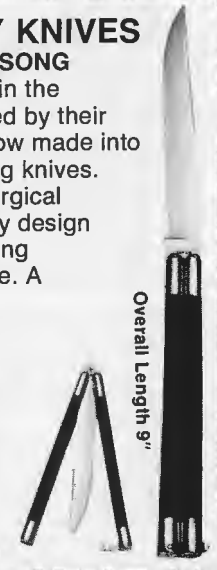
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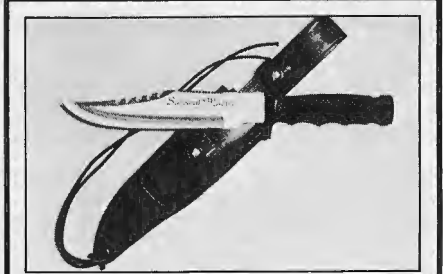
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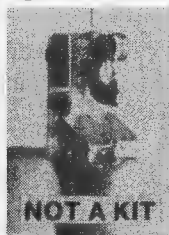
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The FM-7 is a professional quality miniature radio transmitter, used around the world by police, detectives, and security agencies. The sensitive microphone can pick up a whisper at 25 feet with excellent sound quality. The 90 mw antenna has a range of 1/4 mile. Use your own FM radio to receive it. You can use it as a quick-drop bug, or install it permanently at the location under surveillance. The FM-7 comes ready to use, with instructions, delivered in a small, plain envelope. **Notice: This device is only to be used in conformity with all Federal, State and Local laws.** The FM-7 is for security use only.



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## DANNER BOOTS

Continued from page 101

about their construction. "Leather quality and tanning are first-rate," he said. "They'll last a good long time, Stitching's very good, too. Toe and heel counters will stay rigid... This steel shank'll keep the soles from breaking down... and the padded midsole, that's a nice touch. Keeps your legs from getting tired when you have to stand or run a lot... They even put washers behind the rivets holding the D-rings to keep them from pullin' out! I like these boots."

So do I. I've never worn a better boot — and probably never will. ✕

## BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 12

### GAMES AFGHANS PLAY...

Just how do Afghan children pass the time when they're not dodging Soviet helicopters or toy bombs? Nico van Oudenhoven's book, *Common Afghan Street Games*, gives a few interesting answers. How about the delightful "Little Fly"? Each child licks a piece of candy and puts it on the ground. When a fly lands on one of the pieces, the fly-chosen owner takes all. And to burn off all those excess calories, a rousing round of "Castigation" pits one kid — bound hand and foot and thrown to the ground — against his mates, who kick him like a sort of human soccer ball. You get out of being "it" when you spit at another player and hit him. Or, in a twist on "Simon Says," a kid who messes up the instructions is not only out of the game, but "is untrue to his religion" as well. In a country where nearly everyone is Moslem, that's kind of like being an AIDS carrier in a monastery.

### UNITA NEWSLETTER...

UNITA, Jonas Savimbi's anti-communist resistance movement in Angola, has established an office and a newsletter based in Washington. The office is headed by Dr. Figueiredo Paulo, who was banquet speaker at the 1985 *Soldier of Fortune* Convention.

His office, called Free Angola Information Service, publishes the *Kwacha News* newsletter. For



subscriptions or more information, contact: Free Angola Information Service, 1850 K Street NW, Suite 370, Washington, DC 20006; phone (202) 775-2202.

And speaking of Angola, Chevron Corporation, which helps prop up the Marxist government in Luanda through oil dollars, announced earlier this year that it's selling off 20 percent of its Angolan operation to European interests. Why? In a telex sent by Chevron Corp. bosses R.W. Armstrong and J.A. Wild from San Ramon, California, to their manager at the Malongo field operation in Cabinda, the proper corporate response to the question "[Is this decision] in response to conservative pressures in the United States?" is "Absolutely not." The telex goes on to say: "You will also note that any suggestion that the decision is political will be strongly denied."

Is this corporate-speak for "plausible deniability"?

### INDIA'S RUSSIAN BIRD OF PREY...

The Indian Air Force has taken delivery of its first two squadrons of Soviet-made MiG-29s, and it seems the Indians agree with the U.S. Air Force about what makes a good moniker for a top-of-the-line fighter. The Indians have christened their new aircraft the *Baz* — which means "Eagle."

The quite modern new MiG-29 generally is known in the West by its NATO-assigned code name "Fulcrum."

### OCTOBER INCOMING...

● **Uncle Sam's Solid Shield** — Hit the beaches of North Carolina with SOF staffer and Marine vet G.B. Crouse as he covers one of the largest Joint Service combined amphibious ops held in the United States. Snafu or clockwork precision? SOF digs in to give you the answer.

● **Behind the Bamboo Curtain** — SOF's exclusive report on the PRC's military small arms industry continues with Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis' in-depth report on Types 54 and 77 heavy machine guns. Can they cut it on today's battlefields? SOF breaks it down for you.

● **Our Man in Beirut** — SOF correspondent and adventurer Gene Scroft takes a shot at training *Sadem*, the elite strike troops of the Christian Lebanese Forces. Crack commandos in a no-win war? SOF takes you to the "Paris of the Middle East" to find out.

● **Battleground Ethiopia** — SOF treks to east Africa and joins with the Oromo Liberation Front in its fight for freedom against the Soviet puppet government of Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam. In one of his last assignments before his untimely death in Mozambique, veteran SOF correspondent Almerigo Grilz takes you to the front lines of this war the world forgot.

● If nothing less than the best in combat reporting, exclusive weapons T&Es and elite unit coverage will do, then stay with us next month. On sale 8 September. ✕

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## USAF Flight Jacket -

These flight jackets are issued to military fliers and are designated Type MA1 for Intermediate Cold. (This means that it is the medium weight jacket, designed for comfort in a temperature zone of about 20° to 55° F). Look for the military designation, sizes and stock numbers inside the left pocket. The outer shell and lining are 100% nylon making the jacket completely wind and waterproof. The interlining is 100% polyester fiberfill for the highest degree of warmth per ounce. This jacket is reversible; outside in your choice of either sage green or blue and the inside is survival orange. It features: two hip pockets outside as well as inside, sewn pen and pencil holders plus zippered easy access storage pocket in the left sleeve. This a snappy, convenient, warm, fully functional jacket and it happens to be the latest fashion trend.

### Specify:

- Sage Green or Blue Shell - Regular Length Only. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL \$49.95/each
- Black (nylon shell) or Camouflage (50% cotton/50% nylon shell) - Regular Length Only. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL \$49.95/each

New for 1986/87 Season!!

- Long Lengths in Flight Jackets - Add \$6.00 per jacket.

## Special Forces Green Beret -

Jaunty and darning and classy - like the professional's who wear them. These are official regulation berets of 100% vat dyed wool and meeting all military specs. Made expressly for us by the prime government contractor. Also available Official headgear for Airborne Qualified (Maroon), Ranger Commandos (Black), Artillery & Guardian Angels (Red), Commando Dress (Camouflage). Sizes - 6 7/8 to 7 3/4

(Not sure of head size? Tell us how many inches around your head where you wear your hat. We'll send the right one) \$13.75/each

## Angle Head Flashlite -

This is the heavy duty plastic flashlight issued to all military units. The flashlight is waterproof, non-glare and features 4 different lenses which can be easily installed or removed. It can clip onto the belt or suspender for hands free operation. Operates on 2 standard D cell batteries and comes complete with a spare bulb. Brand new, sold in the GI box. Choose: Olive Drab (DO) green or black \$6.50/each.

## Black Commando Dog Tag Set -

(A Kaufman's Exclusive): 2 GI stainless steel tags specially treated to be non-glare flat black plus 2 black (4" and 24") ball chains \$6.00/set

## Regulation GI Dog Tags -

set of 2 stainless steel tags and 2 stainless chains (4" and 24") \$4.00/set. Want us to print them? WE'LL PRINT ANY THING up to 6 lines and 15 spaces per line. Printing only \$1.50 per tag (\$3.00/set).

## Dog Tag Silencers -

black, non-glare rubber bumpers for tags \$1.25/pair.

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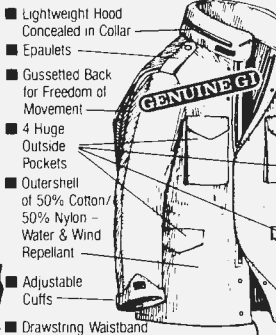
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## Quality, Functionality and WARMTH. . .

When it comes to winter clothing, the 3 main concerns of the military are quality, functionality and WARMTH. After this they think about price. The US military wants its troops to keep warm in the winter in clothes that will last a bunch of winters. They know quality costs more. Genuine military clothing isn't the cheapest. But as every ex-GI knows, the clothes seem to last forever, they're very, very warm and designed to be functional. Most of the items in this ad are current military issue, brand new and unconditionally guaranteed to satisfy you or your money back. And when you consider the quality, do the prices seem high at all?

## Field Jacket - Type M65

In one form or another, this jacket has been the military workhorse for over 40 years and is still going strong. The field jacket is designed for 3 season wear. In winter you can button in the liner (see below) or wear a vest or heavy sweater under it.



■ Lightweight Hood Concealed in Collar  
■ Epaulets  
■ Gusseted Back for Freedom of Movement  
■ 4 Huge Outside Pockets  
■ Outer shell of 50% Cotton/50% Nylon - Water & Wind Repellent  
■ Adjustable Cuffs  
■ Drawstring Waistband

## M65 Liner -

designed to be buttoned into the M65 Field Jacket. These liners are lightweight, polyester-fiberfilled, and very warm. Order same size as your field jacket. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL \$19.00/each.

## Ranger Combat Cap - Woodland Camouflage -

latest Army issue. This winterweight cap features lined flaps which can fold out to keep your ears warm and tucked into the hat when the weather's bad. Sizes run small! Also available in Olive Drab (OD) Green. Sizes: 7, 7-1/4, 7-1/2, 7-3/4 \$8.50/each.

## Drill Instructor/Smokey the Bear Hat -

Formerly called the Campaign Hat, this is a really fine quality pressed felt headpiece. A hat with character. No one who wears it escapes a personality change. An uncontrollable urge to shout orders or hear abuses, pursue flammies or write traffic tickets. Let your true or wishtful self be heard. Commercially manufactured to exacting specs. Sizes 6-7-8 to 7-3/4 \$19.75/each.

## Genuine Leather Chin Strap

■ Acorn Hat Cord (as shown) \$7.75/each. (Specify color: silver, gold metallic, black/gold, metallic, yellow, red or light blue)

## USAF Heavyweight Flight Jacket - Type N2B

DESIGNED FOR TEMPERATURES OF -10° TO 32° F.



- Polyester Fiberfill Lining - (Maximum Warmth Per Ounce)
  - Nylon Shell - (Waterproof & Windproof)
  - 2 Outside Pockets
  - Knit Cuffs and Waist
  - Pile Line Hood - (drapes over shoulder when not needed)
  - Flap Under Zipper to Prevent "Cold Spots"
  - Zippered Sleeve Pocket with Pencil Holder
- Choose: Black or Sage Green Outer Shell Color.  
Sizes: S, M, L and XL.  
\$94.25/each.

## Watch Cap - 100% Wool -

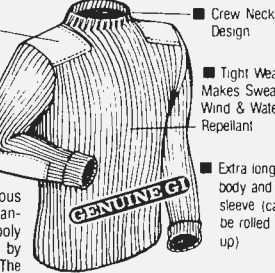
■ Tight Ribbed Weave  
■ Roll Down to Cover Ears When Desired  
■ One Size Fits All  
Choose Color - Black or Olive Drab (OD) Green \$6.00/each.



## MILITARY GOODS CATALOG

1987 edition. 84 pages, loaded with genuine military clothing, gear and equipment. \$2.00/each. Free with order.

## Commando Sweater -



- Sleeve and Shoulder Patches at Points of Wear
- 100% Wool
- Crew Neck Design
- Tight Weave Makes Sweater Wind & Water Repellent
- Extra long body and sleeve (can be rolled up)

This is the famous British Commando Sweater (Woolly Pulley) adopted by the US Military. The natural 100% wool fibre content makes the sweater super warm. Specify size: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46 \$44.75/each. Sizes 48, 50 add \$5.00/each.

Choose:  Olive Drab (OD) Green Crewneck (USMC approved);  Black V-Neck with epaulets and name plate area on breast (US Army approved);  Black Crewneck (no epaulets or nameplate area);  Camouflage Crewneck;  Tan Crewneck;  Maroon Crewneck.

## Commando Sweater - Commercially made -

patterned after the GI ones, these are commercially made in easy care 100% acrylic. Although they are copies, they are constructed surprisingly true to the all wool ones, complete with sleeve and shoulder patches. Choose between: Olive Drab (DO) Green or Black. Specify Size: S, M, L, XL \$22.75/each.

## CAMOUFLAGE

### Commando Camouflage Headnet - Spandoflage -

Expandable camouflage mesh fits comfortably on any size head. Cool in summer, warm in winter, this revolutionary new mesh material can be cut (but will not unravel) to form eye-holes for the comfort of eyeglass wearers. Choose: Woodland Camouflage, Desert Camouflage or Solid Black \$6.00/each; 2 for \$11.00.



### Camouflage Face Paint -

Each metal tube contains 2 colors of facepaint which can be easily removed with soap and water. Current military issue. Choose: Woodland Camo (green & loam); desert camo (light green & sand); snow camo (white & loam) \$2.75/tube; 2 tubes for \$5.00.

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Please include appropriate shipping costs from chart below with each order. Amounts shown include costs of postage, packaging insurance and handling.

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